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No. 1.
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Vol. 1.
1904.

County Louth Archæological Journal.

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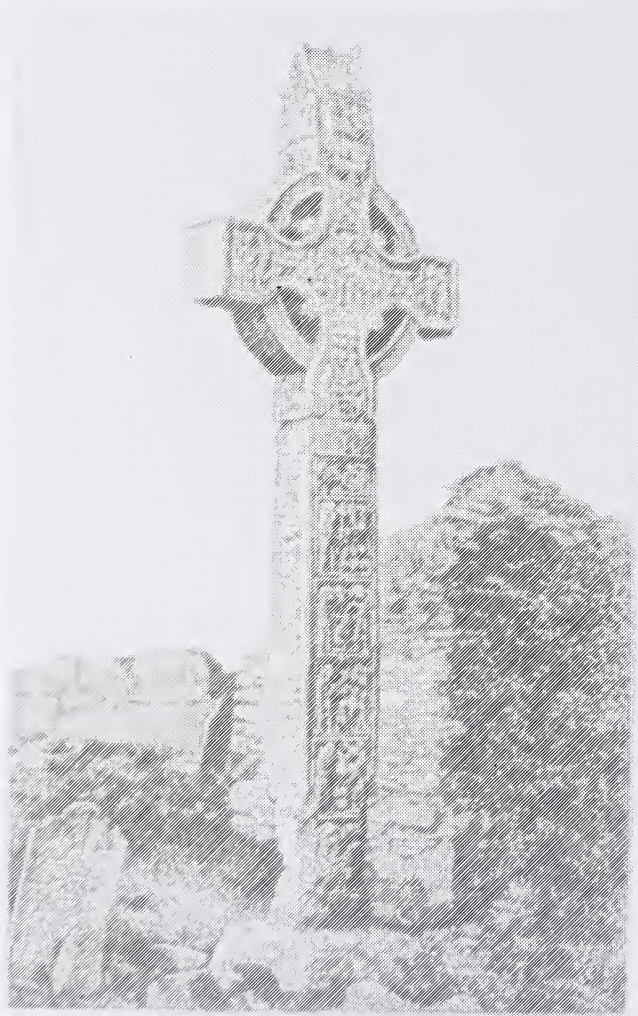
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HIGH CROSS, MONASTERBOICE.

JOURNAL
OF THE
COUNTY OF LOUTH
ARCHÆOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

ESTABLISHED 1904.

VOL. I. No. 1.

DUNDALK AND DROGHEDA:
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED FOR THE SOCIETY
By W. TEMPEST.

1904.


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JOURNAL OF THE COUNTY LOUTH ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY

No. I.

JULY, 1904.

Vol. I.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

By JOHN RIBTON GARSTIN, F.S.A., M.R.I.A. (late V.-P.), President R.S.A.I.

[Mr. Garstin being unable to write out his address in full, the report published by the Dundalk newspapers is here printed, as revised and augmented.]

MR. GARSTIN, who was introduced by the President to those present, was received with applause, and in the course of his address said, it gave him pleasure, in the first place to congratulate the Chairman on the position to which he had been elected, as also the County Louth on the formation of such a society as that which held its first meeting that day. This local Archæological Society seemed to have made good progress in point of numbers since its formation. Louth was not the first Irish county to start such a society—Kildare, Cork; Waterford, and Galway had all established Archæological Societies, and had published journals of great value relating to these counties, especially the small County of Kildare. Lately Galway came into the field and commenced issuing a very satisfactory publication. Further, it was to be remembered that the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, which might now be regarded as the parent Irish Society, and of which he was proud to be at present President, was the largest such society in the United Kingdom, and it had originally started as a county association at Kilkenny. He merely mentioned it to show the success to which such a society might attain, with zeal and energy.

He had an apology to make to them, and that was because he was unable to commit to writing what he called an address, which was prepared on short notice too hurriedly, and he would only have to do as best he could to deliver it impromptu.

He thought the most useful way in which he could begin his remarks was by telling them something about the study of local archæology. He thought it was not necessary for him to go into laboured defence of this study, but lest

there might be any sceptics or people who scoff at the study as being useless it might be well for him to say that there was a practical advantage to be derived by the study of archæology. The progress of the country in the future depended largely on a knowledge of the habits, manners and customs of those who lived in former ages, and to give a small instance of what he said, he would refer to one fact having an important bearing in connection with the question which engaged the greatest attention of Irishmen at the present day : namely the question of Land Purchase. Everybody, of course, knew something about it. Still he could name to them an office in a certain part of Ireland—not in Dublin—where the particulars as to the value of land was to be obtained, and where the rents that were paid in this country in the past century were recorded—areas, qualities of the land, and other matters relating to the fixing of the value of land in the various districts. He would not refer to that matter any further, he mentioned it only to show how the records of a country, when properly kept, could afterwards be turned to account.

County Louth was the smallest county in Ireland. He believed it was almost exactly the one hundredth part of all Ireland, and, therefore, they could easily judge as to its comparative importance ; but notwithstanding its being so small, it possessed an extraordinary amount of antiquities of various kinds. He thought there was hardly any description of antiquity of which Louth did not contain examples, except Stones with the inscribed writing or scorings called Ogham. There were no Ogham stones to be seen nearer than Armagh.

He did not purpose going into Irish History as that would furnish material for many lectures. He supposed there was hardly another district in Ireland which figured as largely in the annals of the past as the one in which they were, Dun Dealgan. Cooley district also teemed with legends, and historical stories, but these would all have to be got together and compared, in order to arrive at historical facts. The increased study of the Irish language and literature would probably result in bringing many communications to the Society. The Royal Irish Academy was publishing a great deal of material for scholars to work upon. He would not deal with these publications on that occasion, he would only refer to objects which they could see, and in fact touch every day.

But before noticing such objects he thought it well to point out the chief sources of information ; and in the first place to refer to the

PRINTED BOOKS

An account of all the topographical work relating to the various parts of Great Britain and Ireland was published by Mr. Anderson, one of the librarians of the British Museum. It contained 430 pages, and dealt chiefly with the antiquities of the United Kingdom. Out of these 430, Ireland only claimed 30 pages, and County Louth was represented by 15 lines (laughter).

Wright's " Louthiana " was a remarkable book by an extraordinary man. It was first published in London, in the year 1748, and a second edition appeared

just ten years later. It was a model of typography. The illustrations, considering the period in which they were done, were noteworthy indeed. The two editions of it were brought out by different London publishers, and not by the same printer, and it was a remarkable thing to note how exactly line for line the second edition was reproduced from the former, with not even a comma misplaced. The first edition of the book was more valuable than the second, because the plates or engravings had a better impression, and in the second edition the list of subscribers was not published. With regard to the author of "Louthiana," he seemed to have been a very versatile man. He was a professor in the University of Durham, and came to Dundalk on a visit to Viscount Limerick, afterwards Earl of Clanbrassil, to whom the work is dedicated. His Will is a very curious document. A life of him, with an engraved portrait, appeared in the "Gentleman's Magazine." He travelled about a great deal in Ireland. In the British Museum there was a very large collection of views and notes prepared by him for the histories of other counties.

In 1826 the first "History of Drogheda" was published. It was printed in that town by Patrick Kelly and was deserving of notice as a specimen of local typography. It was a very small book with an ambitious title, and was by L. C. Johnston, who also edited in 1834 "original" letters written by Cromwell during the siege of Drogheda. These booklets are very rare and the British Museum Library has no copy. In Mr. Garstin's copy there appears as a frontispiece an engraved view of Drogheda, showing the old bridge, the king's castle, (which stood near the "Bull-ring"), and a curious rock on the strand, all of which no longer exist. This engraving appears to have been published in 1798 in the "European Magazine."

About 100 years after the publication of Wright's "Louthiana" came the next important printed book about the County Louth. It referred to Drogheda, and was written by John D'Alton. It was an excellent book and included the history of that portion of the Counties of Meath and Dublin through which the Railway now called the "Great Northern" runs. There was also a view of Drogheda prefixed to the first volume of the book showing the original railway station covered over from side to side, before the great bridge was built. This work was in two volumes, and Mr. D'Alton was aided in its production by local authorities. The accounts of some of the antiquities were not free from errors.

Next came the History of Dundalk, by the same Mr. D'Alton, published twenty years later, in 1864, with the help of Mr. J. R. O'Flanagan, in one volume. It was a good book as far as it went, and according to the time in which it was written. The maps were the most interesting thing it contained. The original of the oldest one, dated 1655, was in Mr. Garstin's possession and was the work of an ancestor of his. A later one, dated 1675, showed the "Corporation Arms" with the three birds, which now figure on the Seal of the County Council.

A mine of information about Dundalk and its early inhabitants is the privately-printed folio—"Roden Title to Dundalk," which is but little known. It is undated, but was compiled about 1839, and consists chiefly of legal documents from 1667 to that date. It has a list of these under the heading "Contents," with references to nearly 500 pages, but no Index, and as the volume is not paged, except with printer's alphabetical "signatures," reference to it is inconvenient.

MANUSCRIPTS.

Having told them, as he hoped, enough about written books, he would next refer to some of the Manuscripts available. In the year 1744, shortly before Wright began to write his "Louthiana," one Isaac Butler was apparently commissioned by some society in Dublin, to go through different parts of Ireland, and take sketches, and note the inscriptions, antiquities, old churches, etc., that he met with. He came into County Louth, near Drogheda, and the first place he directed his steps to was, of course, Mellifont Abbey, and it was on his way to that place that he passed a village which he called "Dullagh," now known as Tullyallen. From that he went on to "Collonmor," which was undoubtedly Collon. There were only about 20 small houses in it at that time. From thence he passed to Ardee, and on to the mineral Spa there, which he examined very minutely. Then he came to Knockbridge and Dundalk. In his Journal of this tour, Isaac Butler described several places in the County Louth, including Dundalk or Shroad-Bally, and as a specimen of the entries may be of interest it may be well to refer to what he says about Dundalk. He first gives an inscription over the door of a school at the entrance of the town, and three in the churchyard of St. Nicholas. Of that building he says little, but he incidentally notes:—"After forenoon service in English, the French have the use of it, there being about 70 or 80 of that nation settled here." These were Huguenots, the history of whose settlement was connected with the linen industry. He proceeds:—"The Parliament Square or manufactory at Dundalk is not above half finished, each side to be 300 yards long. There is at present but four houses employed in the working of fine hollands and cambricks. They have the looms underground, in large turned arches of brick, four looms in each arch. There are three salthouses which are said to make exceeding good salt with sea water. They have a great call for it, and it is said the owners have considerable profit. The entrance by sea was heretofore very dangerous, by reason of several banks and shallows which obstructed the passage of vessels. The Lord Limerick last year remedied this evil by employing a vast number of hands to clear the channel, which at a great expense he has performed, and made it as they say, as safe as any port in the kingdom. The tide ebbs a vast way out, leaving a great strand where they get cockles and mussels in plenty. There were ten castles in and about Dundalk, which was fortified with walls and gates, now all demolished. Near Castletown, close to Dundalk, there is St. Winifred's Well, where vast crowds

of persons resort on the 24th June to pray, eat, drink, and get drunk, which concludes in broken heads and sore limbs, which happened there this year. Captain Tipping, who lives at Castletown, had, by beat of drum, prohibited their meetings there, but by the interest of the three brewers of Dundalk they got liberty. The linen manufactory improves daily here, the women and children spinning or doing some part of the work."

The next thing the lecturer proposed to make reference to was the Ordnance Survey. About 70 years ago it became necessary to make a Government Survey, though many of the previously existing maps of the counties of Ireland were very good. In order to properly carry out the survey a staff of Irish-speaking travellers was got together, and directed by Captain Larcom was sent about to collect all kinds of information about the various places, their local divisions, peculiarities, names &c. For the County Louth the two men selected were Messrs. O'Keeffe and O'Connor. They wrote at great length, but did not show much knowledge of the Gaelic language. The letters recording their observations were all filed, and placed in a Government office, whence they were transferred to the Royal Irish Academy. Major General F. W. Stubbs got a copy of these made which he richly enlarged by his own annotations, and left them in fact a mine of unpublished local information now in Mr. Garstin's possession.

A curious notice of Dundalk in the early part of the reign of Henry VIII. has lately appeared in the life of Isabella D'Este, Marchese of Mantua, published by Julia Cartwright (Mrs. Ady) and of which Lord Belmore sent an account to the *Ulster Journal of Archæology* (1903, p. 101, etc). An Italian named Chiericati was sent by the Pope as Nuncio on an embassy to Henry VIII. and his first wife, Katherine of Aragon. He was a correspondent of Isabella D'Este, and wrote her a long letter in Italian, in 1517, saying he and his suite were going to Ireland to see St. Patrick's Purgatory, and other wonderful things in that island. Accordingly they left London with a letter from the King, and the Nuncio recounts how they travelled to 'Dublino' where they were courteously entertained by the Archbishop and the Count of Childaria (Earl of Kildare), the Viceroy. He proceeds to say, "We went on with letters from them to Dromore. (this should be "Droghda") a city in a pleasant plain, and five miles further to Doncalek, once a famous city but now in ruins." This is evidently Dundalk, (the c being probably a mistake for d). A day's journey of 24 miles took them to Ardmagha, which was very desolate, and in the midst of a savage country. Clogher they found full of thieves—the former a walled city. Their account of their experiences at St. Patrick's Purgatory is extremely interesting. They returned to Armagh, and visited the Abbey of "Verdelino" (which is Newry) and thence went on to Don (Down) where they found a countryman of theirs from Viterbo, bishop, aged 114. So great was the anxiety of the people there to kiss the Nuncio's clothes, that he was forced to stay at home. "Such," he adds, "is the annoyance which arises from overmuch religion." This difficulty does not seem to have arisen at Dundalk (laughter).

EARTH-WORKS.

It would next be advisable to refer to the several classes of antiquities, and for that purpose to first take up "Earth-Works." To refer again to books. One he might especially direct them to, was a paper published last year by the Royal Irish Academy, from the pen of Mr. T. J. Westropp. It contained engravings of raths, duns, lisses, cahers, cashels, etc., which Mr. Westropp divided into two distinct classes, namely, simple and complex. In Ireland there were no fewer than 30 or 40 thousand of those duns, so that it would be almost impossible to state accurately the number in any given county. Louth was very rich in them, and he directed special attention to those in the town of Louth, Ardee, Mount Ash, Mountbagnal, and Roskea, or Rosku, round which there was a treble circumvallation. These mounds were to be found in every part of Europe, so that it would be absurd to say that they were at all peculiar to Ireland. He was not going to discuss their age, but Westropp records them from 300 years B.C. to 600 years after. He mentioned them as places of habitation, fortified dwellings, etc., and the circular entrenchments were regarded as places of defence against the ravages of wild beasts. Some of these raths were also used as places of public meeting.

Some years ago General Sir Henry Lefroy (a brother of the late Lady Rathdonnell) in digging into the centre of one of these old raths, (Greenmount, near Castlebellingham), found a few "celts" and some harp pins, and, what was a more remarkable thing, he found a little piece of bronze about four inches long, which on close examination it was discovered contained an inscription in the Runic characters. The inscription was found when translated to be as follows: "Domnall Selshof owns this sword." The bronze plate was evidently a part of a sword handle. They should not suppose that the Danes erected these raths, as some people were inclined to think. The Danes did little but ravage and destroy everything in their way, as they were accustomed to land in creeks as pirates. There was a tower at Drogheda called Millmount, which was supposed to have belonged to this class of structure. There were sepulchral as well as ordinary moats. Newgrange was one constructed of round stones, and furthermore, it had a ring of upright large stones, and he remembered Professor Du Noyer telling him that the formation of this meant the life work of a whole tribe, for these stones were not available nearer than County Tyrone. It was impossible to make out the meaning of some concentric circles, symbols, and zig-zags which were often to be found in connection with these duns. Some authorities thought they showed indications of sunworship, and there are figures which may represent Danish galleys.

STONE STRUCTURES.

Mr. Borlase, a Cornish antiquary, spent a long time in this country writing an elaborate book on cromlechs or dolmens of which the County Louth possessed some fine examples such as that at Ballymascanlon. The County was

specially rich in Round Towers. They might not imagine that he was going to discuss the age of any of these towers. He was quite content to accept Petrie's theory. The one in Monasterboice was in charge of the Board of Works, and he was glad to be able to state that the Board took great care of everything connected with the tower. He himself was one of the committee of four who were elected to advise as to the care of these buildings. There were several notable early ecclesiastical edifices in the County Louth which had not as yet been adequately described. Miss Balfour had published an account of Mellifont, and Mr. Scott of Drogheda had written about it in the "Builder." The Board of Works reports included important and little-known notices of the "National Monuments" in their charge. The Abbeys of Carlingford and Louth needed fuller description. But perhaps the most neglected and yet most careworthy building was the isolated stone-roofed oratory at Louth, which was associated with curious legends, and was, as an architectural edifice, one of the few of its class now remaining.

The "High" Crosses of Louth enjoyed a world-wide celebrity, and fortunately had been fully described by the late Miss Stokes. The "Muiréadach" cross of Monasterboice figured prominently in the Dublin Museum and its companion had also lately been reproduced there. The cross of Termonfeckin and the Irish inscription, now preserved in the church porch, was worthy of careful study.

But besides ecclesiastical structures, the County possessed a series of Castles, including those of Carlingford and Roche which—if in England—would attract numerous visitors. These stately structures, in splendid positions, had never been adequately described, though plans of them were to be found in the books above mentioned. There were also several Castles of the Pale, besides ordinary Castles for residence and defence, some such as Castletown still in wonderful repair, for their builders knew how to make mortar of a kind not to be met with nowadays.

INSCRIPTIONS.

Mr. Garstin then went on to refer to ancient inscriptions such as that on Bellew's Bridge near Castletown which was still legible. He was sure many of them passed the Bridge of Drogheda without noticing a stone at one end of it, on which was an inscription. It would be impossible to read it, but they could see the coat of arms on it, and he had a copy which was made about 160 years ago. In the Dundalk Demesne was a remarkable Greek inscription to one "Monthermer" and just over the border, in the County Armagh, was the Kilnesaggart pillar stone which had been described by Bishop Reeves, and also in Miss Stokes' "Christian Inscriptions."

Early inscriptions in the letters called Irish are now not numerous in the county. Most of them were recorded in the fine volume first referred to, which was published by the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland. They included

that on the chief cross at Monasterboice and on the stone at Termonfeckin. There was also one in the churchyard of Louth Abbey. It was on a tomb of Richard Taaffe who died in 1726, only a few letters now remain, but Mr. Garstin has a copy which was made about the middle of the 18th century. In the churchyard of Drumcar there was a bilingual inscription of the last century. The members should copy such inscriptions and publish them in the Journal, as the late Col. Vigors did, whose "Journal of Memorials of the Dead in Ireland" preserved many inscriptions which would soon perish.

TOWN HISTORY.

Mr. Garstin referred to the municipal history of Drogheda, with its splendid Mace and Sword, and the remarkable Bruce occupation of Dundalk, and the walls and towers surrounding both these towns. Also the municipal records of Ardee and Dunleer with their freemen and "Sovereigns" which would require a volume to describe them.

He would not detain them any longer, he only wished their Society every success. He was glad to see such a number of ladies present: it was a sure sign of success. The Galway Society had elected a lady as their Secretary. (Hear, hear, and applause.)





The Early Legends of Louth.



IN the following pages I try to note the earliest events, legendary and historical, which are reputed to have taken place in the territory of our county, so far as I have been able to find a record of them. This summary is imperfect as there are many sources of information out of my reach, and probably many allusions to this district in traditions, legends, and annals, which are unknown to me and are not catalogued here. It will, however, be as useful as a complete compendium if it elicits from others additional items and references, a criticism of the credibility of the legendary history, and an identification of place-names and of the scenes of incidents.

I would be thankful to some student of geology to explain to us in a subsequent number, the changes which the surface of our county may be supposed to have undergone in acquiring its present appearance and character.

I also trust to a specialist for information as to the aspect its vegetation wore, and the earliest forms of animal life that are conjectured to have inhabited it when man first landed on Ireland's soil.

What Dr. Drennan says of the whole country that when it first rose from the waters "God blessed the green island and saw it was good" is especially true of our plain, since it is to its natural fertility as much as to the industry—despite some historical interruptions—of so many generations of cultivators that we owe the beauty of vegetation and the comparative prosperity that smiles on us in its greening hills and rich harvests and cheerful homesteads.

The annals state that the plain of Louth was cleared in the time of Nemed. This record of a prehistoric tradition confirms the opinion that the district was originally a great forest, which was cut down pretty early in man's occupation of the country, though not, if we give credence to the chronology of the legends, for more than 300 years after the first race made Ireland their home.

The scientific and ethnological theory of the early colonization of Ireland suggests no location of any events in our district. The view formerly held that our Celtic ancestors must have crossed England in their advance from the Continent to our shores would give room for the belief that Louth from its position, must have been amongst the first portions of territory occupied, and its coast have possibly been the landing place of some of their bands. The tradition of the Milesian landing in the Boyne would harmonize with this supposition. But this hypothesis is now being abandoned, and the opinion advanced in endorsement of most of the legendary narratives, that the immigrants are more likely to have sailed up from Spain or France and put to shore on the southern and western coasts.

The information which scientific speculation gives us about the prehistoric period is thus bare and for the most part negative. But the evidence which the county itself offers in its monuments, cromlechs, cairns, burial mounds, forts and caves, testifies to its having been the scene of an active and eventful and populous life in the earliest times. I trust this Society may be able by the co-operation of its members to compile a complete list of all these ancient remains, to investigate them and collect the legends attached to them, and, by a classification and study of their features and an application of the researches and opinion of authorities on such monuments, to deduce from them a theory of the political and social conditions of life and occurrences in our county during the remote centuries to which their formation and use is to be ascribed.

The traditions and the many important incidents in the records of the legendary era which are located in our territory and preserved for us by the annalist and story-teller are a further witness to the important part our county must have filled in the actual events of those times so as to have—on the most sceptical view—caught the imagination of the romancers or suggested itself as the most appropriate locale for the heroic tales they were inventing. But besides these speculations of critical science which give so unsatisfactory a reply to our enquiries, we have another source of information—the ancient legends and annals that have come down to us—and to these we need only give partial credence in order to fill the stage of our county with heroic shapes and romantic incidents.

The records that remain of the events of the early periods may be ranked in two classes: the historical annals and the romantic tales. It seems as if it must always be uncertain what proportion of fact we may assume to underlie the narrative left us of the earliest times. Of the tales or legends some, like the Fate of the Children of Lir, the Fate of the Children of Tuireann, are entirely imaginative in their plot, and can have no claim to an historical foundation: others, such as the Battle of Mag Tuirread, seem to be a glorified, half mythological explanation of an event which happened under less remarkable circumstances. The stories which centre round Conor Mac Nessa and the Red Branch and those connected with Fionn Mac Cuimail may be best regarded as truths of historical personages and incidents embellished in the course of time, with many poetic and supernatural inventions.

The question of the credibility of the annals and histories is still more puzzling. They trace back the nation's history to a very remote age, and record disjointed occurrences from those points onwards. The very definiteness of their statements about the first colonizations discredits their character for accuracy.

But apart from their chronology (which is believed to be immediately extended but which may nevertheless be a framework for more or less reliable tradition), there is every ground for believing, from the reliance placed on them by the annalists, who, though over credulous of tradition were men of great intelligence and information, and from the great powers of memory and of the oral preservation of legends and genealogies, amongst all primitive early races before the introduction of writing, that the sources from which the existing compilations were made authentic were contemporary evidence of many centuries reaching back behind the time of St. Patrick, and that their narrative of events is trustworthy.

Louth is not the scene of any of the incidents related of the earliest settlers in Ireland—Partholan, the Scythian and his followers, or of the three hundred years' occupation of their descendants. A connection with at least its

northern portion might be conjectured from the tradition that Slainge Partholan's son, was buried on the top of our neighbouring Slieve Donard, and that under the cairn raised upon his grave, which still remains, he awaits a summons to return to life and rule over Éire. In the division of the country by this leader for his four sons, Louth was included in the quarter given Er, which stretched from Aileac Neid at Derry to Dublin.

Of Nemed the next invader, who reached Ireland from the Black Sea with 100 men thirty years after Partholan's race was exterminated by the plague, in A.M. 2850 (F.M.) or 2350 years before Our Lord, it is recorded that he cut down the woods of twelve plains and cleared them for cultivation, one being our county, the plain of Muirtemne. This is the earliest mention I have been able to find. It occurs in the *Annals of the Four Masters* and in Keating. On this statement D'Alton (*History of Dundalk*), hazards the theory that Nemed would have been the builder of the mount of Castletown—Dun-dealgan—at Dundalk: but there is no tradition to support this conjecture.

Nemed's three sons divided the country between them, making the Boyne the southern boundary of Beotac's realm which extended thence to Tory Island off Donegal. From this time forward the mouth of the Boyne at Drogheda—named by the annalists from a later event Inber Colpa—was made a boundary line in almost all divisions of territory, becoming in fact the most frequent and important line of demarcation in use.

The Firbolgs, who, according to the annals, succeeded the people of Nemed about four hundred years later, are regarded by all critical scholars as an actual race of colonists, earlier than the Celts, of the same origin as the Belgæ, who gave their name to Belgium and the Volcæ of France. Their descendents are still traced by ethnologists amongst the present inhabitants of Ireland in the dark race in hair and skin to be found in parts of Connacht—a scientific theory which confirms the truth of a tradition to the same effect.

The leaders of this immigration were the five sons of Dela, who made a five-part division of the island—the mouth of the Boyne being again the boundary of the Northern province which Rugraide obtained; this Rugraide succeeded his brother as king of all Ireland, and after two years of sovereignty was drowned in the Boyne.

Slaigne, the brother who got Leinster from this point southward, is the prince from whom Slane takes its name, and the mound upon the hill on which St. Patrick lit his first Paschal fire two thousand years after, is reputed to be his grave.

Fiodbgean (Feevyan) the son of one of these five brothers—Seangann—who became the seventh Firbolg king, was killed after a reign of four years. A.M. 320; (F.M.), twenty-seven years from the landing of his race, in a battle against Eocaid Mac Erc "at a place called Miug Muirtemne."—(Keating)—but where in our whole county to locate this ancient battle I know not.

It is to a chief of this race Dealga, that the construction of the great mount of Castletown, afterwards the home of Cuculainn, is ascribed (O'Curry, quoted by Ingle, *Names and Places*) and from this early settler in our territory, who must have lived according to the reckoning of the annalists from four to five thousand years ago, Dundalk—Dun Dealgan, Dealga's fort—takes its name.

Another legendary origin for the name is mentioned by D'Alton, (*Dundalk*, p. 269.), without quoting his authority. It is, that the mount is called from a pillar stone in the neighbourhood, known as the dealg or brooch pin of Fionn Mac Cumail—dun dealg Finn.

I am not aware whether a stone so named still remains. The derivation is very interesting, and a criticism of it would be instructive.

The raids of the Fomorian pirates, who according to the narratives, harassed the Firbolgs and the succeeding inhabitants, do not appear to have extended to Louth until a much less remote period.

The next era—that of the De Dananns, who are reputed by the annalists to have possessed the country for two hundred years, intervenes between the Firbolg colonization and the coming of the Milesians or Celts. This people we must state, are regarded by modern scholars as entirely mythical, the stories originating from the imaginings of our pagan ancestors about gods and spirits, and becoming confused by the attempts of later chroniclers to humanise them, but the annalists while rejecting the evidently fabulous or supernatural legends told of the De Dananns, believed in their existence as a race of men and apparently gave credence to their possession of magical powers.

A legend noted by O'Curry in the "Wooing of Emer" relates that it was by the De Dananns' great chief, the Dagda, that Louth was relieved from the waters of the sea which had till then flowed over it. At an incantation uttered by this god-like ruler, the waves receded and left the plain dry land, and from this circumstance the ancient name Muirtemne is traced—Muir the sea, and teimen concealment—Mag Muirtemne, the plain hidden by the sea. As an ingenious derivation of the name this legend deserves attention; we shall later meet another origin for it.

In the De Duann period is placed the events of the celebrated story—"The Fate of the Children of Tuireann"—one of the "Three Sorrows of Story-Telling," the most famous romantic tales of Irish literature, recounted through all the centuries at chieftain's board and by cottage hearth, and committed to writing in both elaborated and synopsised versions by scribes of ancient and later date.

One of the chief incidents in the plot of this story, the murder of Cian, is credited to County Louth—Muirtemne. Its scene is laid in the reign of Nuada Airgiad-lam, the renowned victor of the first battle of Mag Tuiread whose shattered arm, the surgeon, Diancecht, replaced by a silver one

The Fomorian pirates from Lochlann (Norway) had landed on the west coast and devastated the territory of Bodb Dearg, king of Connacht. Lug Lamfada Lugh, of the Long Hand, one of the champions of this race, at this time leader and captain of the *Marcra Sioda*—Fairy Cavalcade—apparently a body of fairy soldiery with which he waged Ireland's battles, asked the king's aid to make war upon these invaders, but Nuada refused because they had not ravaged his own principality. Lugh thereupon determined to oppose the Fomorians himself and set off to muster his own forces. On his way westward from Tara he met his father Cian and two uncles, and requested them to start on separate routes to summon all the members of the fairy cavalcade throughout the island and bring them together to attack the Fomorians where they lay at Mag Mor an Aonaig in Sligo. While his two brothers took southerly directions Cian went northwards and reached the plain of Muirtemne. Crossing it he saw three armed warriors at a distance whom he recognised to be his mortal enemies, the three sons of Tuireann, between whom and his kindred there was a deadly feud. Cian recognised the certainty of death in meeting his three enemies on such unequal terms, and to protect his life transformed himself by a stroke of his magical rod into a pig and joining a herd of swine which he saw near him began rooting the soil along with them.

This feint however did not escape the notice of the three sons of Tuireann,

who were approaching for they had caught sight of the man and observed his sudden disappearance, and the elder, Brian, immediately divined his expedient and concluded he must be an enemy of theirs who sought to escape from them. Whilst the two younger brothers, Iuchoba and Iuchair, were debating how they should kill their enemy without slaughtering the whole herd, Brian striking them with a magical wand changed them into sleuth-hounds with instinct to distinguish and pursue the "druidical" pig. The swine scattered before their chase, but they had instinct to follow Cian, who, still in the pig's shape, fled to a grove of trees, and there Brian catching up upon him transfixed him with a spear.

The wounded man-beast screamed in a human voice, and when questioned by Brian declared his identity, and asked for mercy. The two younger brothers expressed their willingness to let him go unharmed and their sorrow for their attack, but Brian mindful of his feud, swore that he would not give him his life. Cian then demanded the right of being allowed to resume his human shape and to meet death in it, to which his opponents consented. He then declared his triumph over them inasmuch as the eric which they would be obliged to pay in punishment for having slain him would be so much heavier and he prophesied that it would be the heaviest ever exacted of man, and that their weapons would convict them of their guilt to his son.

Brian in rage said they would not use their weapons but proceeded with the help of Iuchoba and Iuchair to crush him to death with the stones that lay about, and then buried his mutilated body deep in earth. The earth however refused to hide their crime and cast up the body on the surface. Six times they covered it in the clay, but as often did outraged nature thrust it up again, to expose the murderers' cruelty. The seventh time their persistence conquered and the grave remained undisturbed. The sons of Tuireann then betook themselves to the scene of battle to join the forces of Lugh.

Lugh in the meantime had gone forward to meet the Fomorians, and after the arrival of his army, had engaged the enemy in battle and defeated them, and compelled them to leave the shores of Eire. He then missed his father from his company and learning that he had not been slain in battle felt assured that death only must have prevented his joining him. He set out eastward across Ireland to seek traces of him, and following his trail from the place where he had parted from him, came to Muirtemne to the spot where Cian had assumed the shape of a pig.

Here the earth spoke to Lugh and told him of the fate his father had met, whereupon Lugh went on to his grave and disinterred the body to discover what sort of death had been inflicted on him. The sight of the mangled corpse increased his rage, and after venting his grief he re-buried his father's remains, placed a tombstone over them on which the dead man's name was inscribed in Ogam, and declared that the hill should be named after Cian. He then made his way to Tara and in presence of the king demanded his eric in atonement from the murderers.

The rest of the tale which is its chief part, is occupied with the wonderful adventures and sufferings of the sons of Tuireann in their accomplishment of the hazardous tasks imposed on them, and their death, which was Lugh's hope of vengeance, before discharging their obligation.

For the site of Cian's grave O'Curry when editing this tale suggested the hill of Dromslian at Dromiskin. The evidence for this spot is the ancient account of the Battle of Crinna in the Book of Lismore, a transcript of a tenth century MS.—and elsewhere.

The battle of Crinna (in Meath, between Mellifont and Slane) was fought in A.D. 226 (A.F.M.) by Teig, chief of Ely, grandson of the Munster king, Oilíoll Ollum, against Fergus king of Ulster on behalf of Cormac Mac Airt, the rightful Ard-Rí of Erin, whom Fergus had driven from his throne.

The narrative tells that Teig having routed the Ulstermen, pursued them "from Criona to Glaise an Earra near Drom Ionasgluinn" (Dromiskinn) so Keating, who quotes as his authority these lines from the poem of "the learned Clanagan whose authority is indisputable :"—

"Tadg mac Cein from Rath Cro subdued the army of Ulster, tho' seven times they rallied and fought, but with superior force overborne they fled, and were pursued from Rath Criona to Ard Cein."

O'Donovan in his note on the Annals of the Four Masters at the record of this battle, quotes from the Annals of Tigearnac (Ed. p. 45) the statement that Tadg obtained from Cormac as his reward the whole region extending from "Glais Neara near Druim Ineascluinn to the Liffey." We shall reach this event later on at its own date.

O'Donovan and O'Curry have no doubt as to the identification of this Druim Ineascluinn with Dromiskinn, the longer form being that by which the place is still called by Irish speakers of the neighbourhood.

This accurate location of the scene of this ancient legend is interesting. Another spot has however been put forward as the site of the murder of Cian—the hill overlooking Cortial Lough in the parish of Louth, by O'Kearney, the zealous though uncritical collector of legends. His supposition is based on this being the centre of the district called traditionally the Valley of the Black Pig. A local tradition remains in middle and north Louth that a black pig was killed somewhere in the district, and that the red colour of the soil about the parish of Roche and elsewhere is due to the stain of his blood.

It is not too hazardous to ascribe to Lug Lamfada himself the origin of our present name Louth. The word Louth seems a clumsy anglicisation of Lugmag. It probably retains only the first of the compound, and is really a distorted form of the hero's personal name alone, crystallised in this pronunciation before the *g* became silent. That it is not an unnatural English garb for the name Lug is shown by the fact that Mac Echagan, in his English translation of the Annals of Clonmacnois made in 1627, renders Lugaid mac It "Louthus."

Lugmag is undoubtedly at any rate the place name in ancient and modern Irish. In present use the word appears as Lugmaige (the three internal consonants being aspirate) which is the genitive case after *Condac* (county) of a nominative Lugmag. The earliest transcript of the name I have been able to meet is in the text of the Tripartite Life of St. Patrick, a work of at latest the 10th century, though attributed by Colgan to the sixth, where it occurs in the form Lugmag and also Lugmad. The name is applied of course, here and elsewhere, to the district about the present town of Louth only. The transference of the name to our whole county took place at a much later time.

I have been unable to find any derivation offered by any Irish scholar of the name Louth or Lugmag, or any exploit of Lug Lamfada's doings in our territory except the incident already narrated of the disinterring of his father's body and raising a grave and stone over him.

There are many other Lughs in the authentic period of Irish history, some of them Kings of Erin, but they have no connection with the district of Louth

except perhaps Lugaid Laga of Atherlow in Tipperary, who fought the battle of Crinna near our borders, A.D. 226, and probably took part in the pursuit of the Ulstermen across the plain to Dromiskin.

Pending the expression of opinion from others on this point, I shall delay no longer upon Lug Lamfada. If this identification has been approved by authorities we can claim as our eponymous hero the most widely sung and most glorious of all the demi-gods of Irish mythology, the Ildana or worker of every art, the sun-god personifying in beauty and power the orb of day, whose fairy presence, our ancestors could have believed, still haunts some of the green mounds in the plain of mid Louth.

There seems ground for identifying the fairy Ana or Aine whose name is preserved in Dunany with the great De Danann, mother of the gods and goddess of war, the Mor Riga, called variously Dana, Ana and Aine. The personality of this celebrated character of mythology becomes very confused in the different legends and chronicles. She is introduced as the founder of the De Danann race, the name being derived from hers, and especially as the mother of Brian, Iuchar and Iuchorb, the murderers of Cian, who are also credited with supernatural powers and wonderful achievements, and later as the wife of the Dagda. Knockanny, Cnoc Aine in Limerick, was one of her dwellings, and the mountain Da Cioc Dana, the two Paps of Dana, in Kerry is also named from her.

Her history and attributes as gathered from the folk-lore into which she enters would deserve a special paper, but we cannot give such space to pursue the theme farther here. It is enough for the present to fix the legendary era of her abode in Louth.

The Sideog (Fairy) Ana of Dunany, as she is called in local tradition, is believed to have had her dun or fort on the brow of the headland of Dunany Point, which has been undermined and washed away by the advancing waves. A story remains that the reef of rocks which stretches out here into the sea is portion of a causeway which she began to build to Scotland or England. Tired with her exertions or disappointed at her failure to complete the work, she sat down upon the rock on the shore, which is now known as the Mad Chair, and became mad, or as another version of the tradition recounts, an English fairy displeased at the intrusion into her domain which Ana was attempting, turned her into this stone. A satisfactory explanation is still wanting for the name of this remarkable seat, to which all the distraught in mind were wont to be attracted as to a lodestone.

The fairy daughter of Cualann, who, in jealousy at his preferring her sister for his wife, enticed Fionn Mac Cumail on the chase of Slieve Gullion in the guise of a fawn, and brought on his white hair and decrepitude by contact with the waters of the mountain lake, is almost certainly the same Aine. Under the other name given her in this tale, the Calliag Biorra (pronounced Calliag Virra the *b* being aspirate), she is also connected with another part of Co. Louth—a cromlec of standing stones near Monasterboice being called the Calliagh Virra's House. I have not been able to find any tradition attached to this object.

The fact that Brug na Boinn,—Newgrange and its companion mounds which the very earliest legends make the palace of the Dagda and the home of De Danann heroes or divinities—Fair-haired Angus of the Boyne, the god of youth and love, and his compeers—would justify us in claiming for the south of our county, which is a contiguous portion of the same plain, some share of their mystic memories.

If, as has been suggested by D'Alton, the earthwork of the Millmount, Drogheda, be a part of the great cemetery of the Boyne, the occupation of south Louth by that prehistoric race of mound builders is established, and also the connection of the plain of Ferrard with whatever poetry and legend the romantic imagination of our ancestors wove of this dim twilight of the early gods.

These are the associations as far as I know them which Louth has with the pre-Milesian period of Irish history.

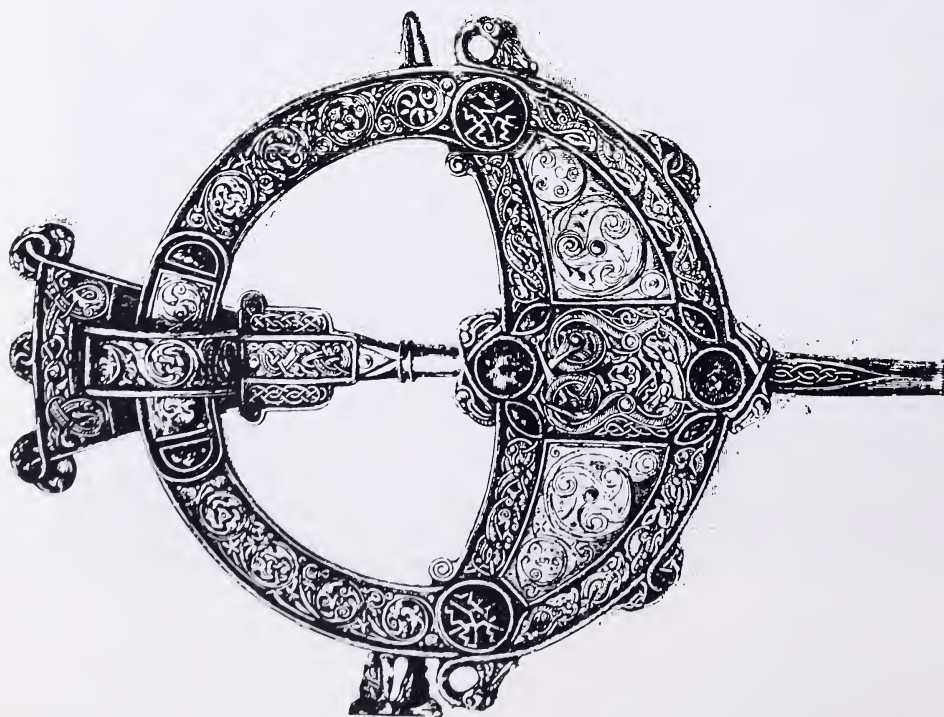
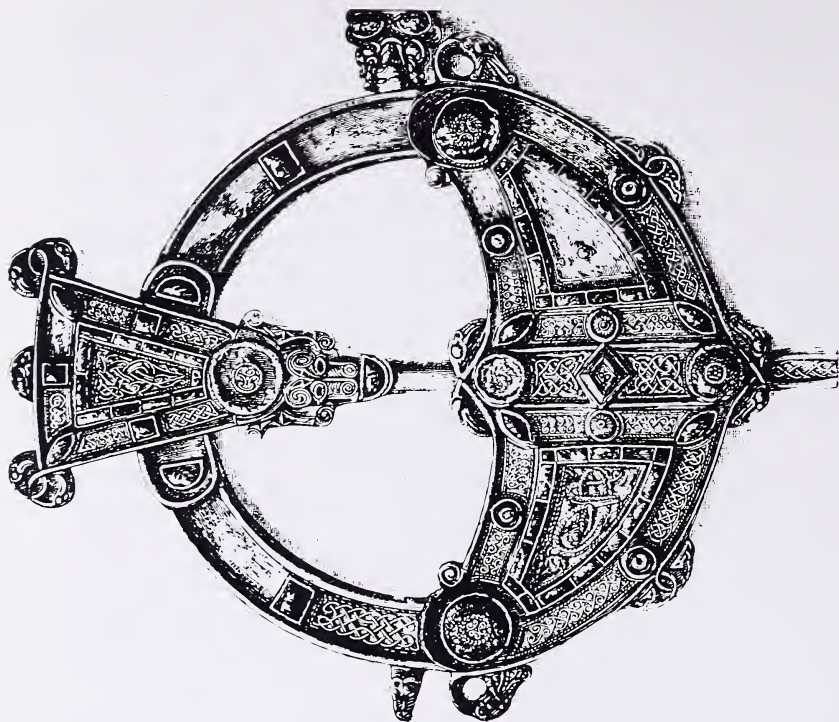
In introducing the fabulous legends of the De Danann race after the more apparently mere historical occurrences located in the times of the other colonies, I have followed the chronological succession assigned them by all the annalists. If the modern view of the De Dananns being entirely mythical, and the Firbolgs having been actual pre-Celtic settlers be accepted, the legends should not interrupt the course of the traditional history of the occupation of our territory by the other races, Firbolg and Milesian, but should be given a separate place as the inventions of a later age, but until some of the various opinions held become more firmly established, it is best to use the frame-work our old historians have left us.

With the invasion of the Milesians which is the next era after the De Dananns in the native annals, we reach authentic history, although the traditional details of the landing and the earlier incidents are probably in many cases imaginary and in other cases exaggerated. Yet it is undoubtedly the coming of our own ancestors, the Celts, the authors of the present Irish race, and their struggles with the earlier inhabitants, and later with one another, that are here chronicled; and though the ancient version is not to be relied on for accuracy of date, the general truth of the chief events it records must in reason be accepted.

Drogheda is the scene of some of the first items in the Milesian's obtaining possession of the island. The narrative is too well known to be repeated at length but for the completeness of this enumeration it is necessary to allude to it.

The sons of Miled it will be remembered made their first landing on our shores at Inber Sceine—now, as is believed, the Kenmare river—in Kerry, whence they penetrated to Tara and summoned the De Danann king to battle for the sovereignty of Ireland. The Tuata De Dananns complained of the inequality of such a contest, as they had no standing army, and proposed that the issue should be tried by the Milesians withdrawing in their ships nine waves into the ocean, and then attempting a landing, when the De Dananns would endeavour to resist them, and the victors in this struggle should possess the land. The Milesians chivalously consented, on the advice of their chief judge and poet Amergin, and retreating to the shore put off to sea. As soon as they turned back towards the shore the De Dananns by their magical arts raised a mighty storm which for a long time baffled their enemies attempt to land. Their fleet was scattered, and many of the vessels swallowed up in the waters, while those that escaped were driven in all directions around the coast.

The chief leader and eldest son of Milesius, Eremon, was carried up the mouth of the Boyne, and got on land on its southern bank about where Drogheda now stands. His brother, Colpa of the Sword, was however drowned in the effort to put ashore near the same spot, and from him the estuary received the name Inber Colpa—the river mouth of Colpa—by which it is usually mentioned in the ancient histories, and which remains attached to this day to the adjoining town-land of Colpe, on the Meath bank.



THE TARA BROOCH, OBVERSE AND REVERSE.

Eremon entrenched himself at his landing place--the south or formerly Meath portion of the present town of Drogheda, and there erected according to supposition the magnificent fortress of the Millmount, which after having been the citadel for Celt, Dane, and Norman, and having defended the town against Sir Phelim O'Neill, against the Parliamentary army, and against Cromwell, and in many a less historic struggle, is still utilised as a military stronghold, and preserves much of the outline that made it so well nigh impregnable through all the centuries of warfare of which it bore the brunt. Another most interesting tradition of the origin of this mound, cited by D'Alton without reference to its source, is that it is the grave of Amergin, the brother of Eremon, the royal poet and judge of the Milesians.

Eber Fionn, the brother of Eremon, and co-leader, second in command of the expedition, had meantime landed in Munster and fought his way up the country till he effected a junction with Eremon at Drogheda, when the two marched to Tailteinn in Meath, and there defeating the king of Tara, established their supremacy of the race.

The Boyne at Drogheda was again made the boundary of the two divisions of the island which the brothers made between them, Eremon taking the northern half, including our county, as his principality.

J. M. D.

The Tara Brooch.

(Two Illustrations.)

THE two finest examples of the goldsmith's work of ancient Ireland that are now extant are the Tara Brooch and the Ardagh Chalice. We give the two illustrations and this notice of the Tara Brooch in our *Journal*, because this splendid work of early Irish art was found, not at Tara, but at Bettystown near Drogheda. The name "Tara" was given to it by a Dublin jeweller into whose hands it passed, and he gave it this title no doubt on account of the wonderful and regal style of its ornamentation.

It was discovered near the seashore on the 24th August, 1850, by the child of a poor woman, who picked it up at the foot of a cliff from which a large piece had recently fallen. The boy's mother sold it to a watchmaker in Drogheda; thence it passed to the Dublin jeweller who named it, and it is now in the National Museum, Dublin.

Strange to say, the Ardagh Chalice was discovered in an equally accidental fashion by a peasant boy who was digging potatoes near Ardagh, County Limerick.

And between these two magnificent relics there is a great similarity of design, which points to contemporaneousness of production.

Other ancient Irish brooches there are in the National Museum, but the Tara brooch is the grandest of them all.

"The Tara Brooch," says Dr. Petrie, "is superior to any hitherto found in the variety of its ornaments, and in the exquisite delicacy and perfection of its execution." According to Margaret Stokes, "It is composed of a metal harder than silver, formed by a combination of copper and tin, called white

bronze. The face of the ornament is overlaid with various ornamented patterns of the same class as those found in Irish illuminated manuscripts, designed with great taste, and which are not confined to the front, but also enrich the reverse.

A lens of no moderate power is necessary if we would appreciate the perfect execution of these ornaments. There are no less than seventy-six varieties of these designs, all of which exhibit an admirable sense of ornamented beauty, and happy fitness for their relative positions.

In the fastening used to keep these delicate tracteries in their places only a delicate bar, scarcely perceptible to the naked eye, is found.

In other places, however, and particularly in the circular insertions of amber, the gold rosettes placed upon them are fastened by pins, which pass through the brooch, and are riveted also on the opposite side.

A silver chain was attached to it, which was intended to keep the pin tight and in its place. This chain is of that peculiar construction known as Trichinopoli work."

This is the description of one who was a thorough mistress of her subject.

It is very usual on Irish works of art to find an inscription, giving the name of the artist, or of the dignitary for whom it was made, or stating the year in which it was made, or asking a prayer for the maker. On the Tara Brooch there is no such inscription. But by studying the various designs and styles of ornament of objects whose dates are known, archæologists have been able to fix the date within a certain period. Both the Tara Brooch, the Ardagh Chalice, and many of the older MSS. are noted for a peculiar spiral design, known as the "trumpet pattern." This design disappears both from metal-work and MSS, generally speaking, after the year 1000 A.D. Hence the date of the Tara Brooch is before that time. In the MSS. this spiral design is seen in the greatest perfection in the Book of Kells, whose date is about 690 A.D. It is most probable it was first brought to perfection in the MS. illuminations, and was then copied by the metal-workers. This fixes the date of the Tara Brooch between the years 700 and 1000 A.D.

Is it not grand to contemplate the wonderful degree of beauty and perfection to which so many kinds of art were cultivated in Ireland a thousand years ago, and what a pity Irishmen know so little and care so little about these things?

HENRY MORRIS.

Bellew's Bridge.*

A LITTLE to the east of Killen Hill there is a Bridge known as Bellew's Bridge, spanning the river, a fine structure of its kind, re-built under the supervision of the late County Surveyor, Mr. John Neville. Set into the parapet is a slab bearing an armorial device and inscription referring to the Bellews, which I cannot now remember, as it is over a dozen years ago since I visited the spot and I have mislaid the note I made.

Was this stone in the old bridge? A Photograph and Rubbing of this should also be preserved.

There must be many more way-side inscribed stones throughout the country, which should be carefully noted.

J. M'CARTE, Liverpool.

Here is the inscription:—THIS BRIDGE WAS BVILT BY SYR. JOHN BELLEWE, OF ROCHE, KNIGHT, AND DAME MARY BERMINGHAME, OF DVNLEER, ———H, HIS WIFE. ANNO 1674.

* [Mr. Garstin, F.S.A., has materials for a paper on this and other Bellew inscriptions.—Ed.]



Monasteries of Louth.

PART I.—THE PRE-NORMAN MONASTERIES.

(Two Illustrations.)



THE constitution of the early Irish church was essentially monastic. There was then nothing like what we have now in the parochial system. St. Patrick, when establishing the Christian religion in Ireland, had to deal, not with the country as a whole, but with the separate clans and septs among whom the country was parcelled out. He saw that, for such a country, the monastic system was very suitable. In each district was established a head monastery with its bishop or abbot. Around this grew up smaller monasteries, and under these again you had small outlying cills or oratories to which the members of the community went out, in order to minister to the spiritual wants of the population.

I intend to treat first of these monasteries which were erected in pre-Norman times, and then of those which were since built. I shall say very little about either Monasterboice or Mellifont, as they have been fully and sufficiently treated elsewhere.

LOUTH.

Before the advent of Christianity, Louth was occupied by a Druid's grove. After his return from his evangelizing mission in Munster, St. Patrick came to Louth, and attracted by the peacefulness and beauty of the surroundings, so congenial to his own taste, he stayed here for about three years. Some writers, among others Archdall, say that he founded the monastery at Louth, but this is contrary to the express testimony of all ancient writers.* We are told that he founded the church at Ardpark near Louth, and furthermore that he wished to build his church and establish his primatial see at Louth, but that he was told by an angel to go further north and leave Louth to an immigrant from Britain. This immigrant was Mochta.

Mochta† was born in Britain, and while still very young, was brought, as a slave to Ireland. His master, a druid named Hoam, whom he afterwards converted, lived near Dundalk. At the command of an angel Mochta went to Rome, where, in due time, he was consecrated bishop. On his return to Ireland he built his first cell at Kilmore a few miles from the town of Monaghan. However, the opposition of a neighbouring clan forced him to leave this and set out for a new habitation. When he came to Louth he was, like St. Patrick, struck with

* Tripartite Life—Jocelyn.

† For Life of Mochta, see Colgan, Healy, and Lanigan.

the suitability of the place for a life of prayer and contemplation, and, after a short struggle with the Druids, he was allowed to take possession. We are told in the Book of Lismore that Patrick was still at Ardpatrik, and that every morning the two saints were accustomed to meet at a place called Lecc Mochta, *i.e.*, Mochta's flag or stone. Each wished to build his monastery at Louth, so they agreed to leave the matter to the decision of heaven. An angel, it is said, brought them the following judgment :—

“ Mochta, pious, believing,
Let him bide in the place wherein he has set up,
Let Patrick, at the King's word, stay at Macha.”

Mochta built a cell and church surrounded with a graveyard. Louth at this time must have been an ideal place for those who wished to disburden themselves of all harassing cares of the world and of the future, and to give themselves up to a life of contemplation and study. It was in the midst of a fertile plain and, unlike now, well wooded. The little stream which had sprung up out of the saint's well at Kilmore, flowed peacefully by, not then choked up with weeds and grass as it is now, and less than a mile away was the Fane to supply fish for their fast days. Just outside the boundary of the monastery, on the summit of the hill, was the earthen fort under which probably the Fírbolg chief who gave his name to the plain lay buried. Away in the blue distance were the mountains, famous in what, even then, was ancient history. The quiet and dreamy character of the landscape was of itself enough to invite meditation, and even still, though bereft of all its beauty, it gives the visitor that same peaceful feeling. No wonder many saints loved it, and often and often St. Patrick when he needed rest revisited Louth and spent a while with St. Mochta who like himself was an immigrant come to labour for the salvation of this lovable people. As a memorial of some of these visits, we have, near by, at Channonrock, St. Patrick's well, and the stone whereon are shown the marks of his staff and of his knees. He would fain stop here altogether, and indeed he and Mochta made the agreement that the survivor should take charge of the church of the other. As it happened, Patrick died first, and Mochta for a short time governed the church of Armagh, but soon humbly resigned it to St. Benignus. Meanwhile, the monastery prospered from every point of view. Numbers flocked to share Mochta's penitential life, and soon at Louth you had not only a large monastery, but a flourishing seat of learning. Mochta lived to a good old age and numerous miracles are attributed to him. Among the principal of them was the restoring to life of a monk named Fintan who afterwards became abbot and who is numbered among the Irish saints.

Mochta died August 16th, 534. He is the author of some works, amongst others of a rule for monks.¹ Probably it was he who began the book called the *Leabhar na Manach* or Book of Cuana, for in the Annals of Ulster it is called the Book of Mochta.⁵

About the time of Mochta's death the school of Louth reached its greatest prosperity ; soon after it began sensibly to decline, although among its members it always numbered some of the most learned men in Ireland. The greater part of its history is occupied with the list of its abbots but with these I shall not here weary you. Many were very holy men, and were numbered among the Irish saints ; several lived the lives of anchorites. In 784 is mentioned the death of St. Feddach, Abbot of Louth, Slane and Duleek. Though it is probable that from the beginning the abbots had the dignity of bishops, yet they are not chronicled as bishops until the beginning of the ninth century. The first who got the title was Maelcanaigh, bishop and anchorite, who died in 815¹ ; after him came

Eochaid O'Toole, abbot, bishop and anchorite, who died in 820¹. His successor was Cuana, who probably completed the book known as the book of Cuana, of which I have already spoken. In 898 died St. Caencomhrac, a holy bishop and anchorite, whose feast was kept on July 23rd.¹ We are told in the Annals of Clonmacnoise that in 818, the shrine of St. Mochta was carried away to Munster. It was first plundered by the Danes in the year 830; again in 839, the Danes of Lough Neagh plundered it, slew several bishops, priests and sages, and made prisoners of the remainder. The Bishop, Finnachta MacÉchthigern who died in 948¹ was a celebrated scholar, he is described by the Four Masters as bishop, scribe and abbot of Louth, and steward of St. Patrick's people.

Early in 968 the Danes must have seized the monastery, for we are told that in that year Donald, King of Ulster, "raided the monasteries of Louth and Dromiskin against the Danes."¹ Later on in the same year they were plundered by Murchadh O'Flaherty.¹ Sometime between 980 and 986 the round tower was blown down. In 1043 Louth and Dromiskin were again plundered, this time by another Irish chieftain Annadh O'Ruairc,¹ but, as nearly all the annalists relate, SS. Mochta and Ronan, the two patron saints, took revenge, for, within three months, he himself was killed.

Before I proceed any further it may be well to say a few words on the state of the Irish church during the eleventh and portion of the twelfth century. Some writers have tried to show that during this period religion was in a very bad state in Ireland, and that many terrible abuses had crept into the Irish church. But when we come to examine the question for ourselves, we find that there is very little foundation for most of the charges—most of the disorders spoken of never existed at all, some of the minor ones did exist, and anyone who carefully considers the social state of Ireland at the time would wonder if there were not some abuses. The Danes had done much harm by plundering the monasteries. After their power was broken there was an almost constant civil war between the O'Briens, O'Connors and O'Loughlins. Hence it was impossible that religion should not suffer in some way. Perhaps the worst abuse that arose was the intrusion of laymen into ecclesiastical offices. During times of war, the bishop or abbot, for safety, gave the monastic property into the hands of the dynast, and so gradually these chiefs began to usurp what they had not the slightest right to. They got themselves appointed to the benefice, enjoyed its revenues, and appointed someone in orders to do the work for them. Hence we find the terms *comharb*, *archinneach*, and *erenach* constantly appearing in the Irish annals during this time. Another abuse which arose, more or less, from the clan system being kept up among the monks was the burning of monasteries by the Irish themselves. When ecclesiastical discipline began to grow lax, the monks often went to battle and fought alongside their own clan, hence their property was not respected by the enemy. Many of the monasteries of County Louth disappeared completely during this period. That of Louth itself affords as good an example as you could find of those two disorders I have mentioned. The last whom the annals designate with the title of Bishop of Louth was Maelmochta, who died in 1044.¹ After that they are called *erenagh*, *archinneach* or *lector*. During the first fifty years the name O'Ciardubhan or O'Kirwan occurs very often, and after that the name O'Duibhinsi. Maelmochta's successor was Maenach O'Kirwan who died in 1045.¹ In 1065 Domhnall O'Kirwan was *archinneach* of both Louth and Dromiskin. In 1123 died Flann O'Duibhinsi; in 1133, Muireadhaig O'Duibhinsi; and in 1147, Fiachra, son of Muireadhaig.¹

It is almost impossible to believe the stories about the number of times Louth

was plundered and burnt about this time. As I have already stated it was sacked in 968 by O'Flaherty and in 1066 by O'Ruairc. In 1102, the archinneach Muir-eadhaig O'Kirwan was slain in a battle with the Meathmen.¹ In 1128 the Conacians made a predatory excursion into Farney and on their way they plundered Louth and the monastery.¹ During the first seventy years of the twelfth century it was burnt at least five times—in 1111, in 1133, in 1148, in 1160 and in 1166.¹ The burning in 1166 was due to lightning and was regarded as a judgment from God, for in the house of Donough O'Carroll, King of Oriel, which was alongside the monastery and which was first struck, there were at the time stopping, Murtoth MacNeill O'Loughlin, King of Ireland, and the chieftains of Kinel-Owen, who were returning from an expedition in which they had dishonoured the Bachall Iosa.

Early in the twelfth century a reformation was effected in the Irish church, chiefly through the exertions of St. Malachy. He seems to have taken a special interest in County Louth. Religion and learning soon began to flourish again. With the help of the pious king of Oriel, Donough O'Carroll, and of Edan O'Kelly bishop of Louth and Clogher, St. Malachy had churches and monasteries built throughout the county. Among the results of their labours were the Cistercian monastery of Mellifont, the restored church of Louth, the monastery of Cnoc-na-Seangan and that of Termonfeckin. It was in 1148 that the new church of Louth was consecrated by him and dedicated to the Blessed Virgin.^{3, 6.}

In 1164 died Maelcaemhgin O'Gorman, abbot of Louth. He had first been abbot of Termonfeckin, but owing to his great learning he was placed over Louth.¹ The Four Masters call him "The chief Doctor of all Ireland." He is thought by some to have been the same as Marianus O'Gorman the famous martyrologist, but it is more probable that this was his contemporary Maeltuired O'Dunan, abbot of Cnoc-na-Seangan who died in 1181.

At the Synod of Kells, in 1152, at which the boundaries of the Irish bishoprics were first clearly defined, Louth was one of the sees fixed under Armagh.⁷ The see so established comprised all that is in the present diocese of Clogher together with County Louth and a small portion of the present diocese of Derry. It was called indiscriminately Louth and Clogher until in 1250 the County Louth was added on to the archdiocese of Armagh. The first bishop was Edan O'Kelly who died in 1182, and among his successors was Tigernach a former abbot of Louth who died in 1218 and was buried within the monastery.⁷

A brilliant career seemed to be opening out before the school of Louth, but unhappily the coming of the Normans cut it short; they came, as they pretended, to effect in the Irish church a reformation which had already been effected by Celsus, Malachy, and Gillibert, and they did their best to undo what these holy prelates had done. In 1176, only four years after their coming, Louth was plundered by them. Again in 1312 during a rebellion of the De Verdons, it was burnt.⁸ Of course the Normans got rid of the mere Irish as soon as possible, and it is on record that the Prior was fined for admitting a mere Irishman into the community. In 1342 a chapter of the Canons Regular of all Ireland was held here by the primate, Albert of Cologne,¹ on which occasion several of the relics which Mochta had brought from Rome were translated. In 1418 the prior was granted first voice in the election of prioress of Termonfeckin.⁹ We are told that Edward Bruce stopped here for a night and that he and his army were entertained by the monks. We can imagine how grudgingly this entertainment was given by the Norman community. In 1425 the Prior was made Justice of the Peace for the county.⁸ In 1488 the then prior was concerned in the rebellion

of Lambert Simnel but shortly afterwards he received pardon from Henry VII.⁹ The last prior, John Wile, sat as a peer in the Irish parliament of Henry VIII. which tried to decree away the independence of Ireland.⁷ At the dissolution of the monastery he was forced to leave but received a small pension. It would take too long to go through all the inquisitions taken about this time. They show the prior of Louth to have been seised of large property⁹ in Louth, Channon-rock, Inniskeen, Feraghs, Dromiskin, Dundalk, Canonstown, Castlecove, Termonfeckin, Reaghstown, Rathbrist, Laraghmyney, and Lyme. Tithes were due to him in many parts of the county, among which it may be of some local interest to mention the following :—Cordei, Racassan, Feraghs, Harrestown, Drumgolow, Agnestown, Rathgrones, Rathbrist, Lowrath, Dromyn, Dromiskin, Newton, Drumlek, Milton, Balterstown, Larath, Faughart, Raskgagh, Lorgon, Kille, Philipstown, Cloughanmoyle, Aclint, Collaghkeylle, Rath, Baltra, Ballygander, and Glaspistoll. Among the buildings which then existed at Louth were the priory, rectory, church, two castles, hall, dormitory, bake-house, pigeon-house and granary. Not many of these now remain—the castles have disappeared, but we know that one of them was built on the fort near the monastery. The church is still there, roofless, and one of the walls nearly gone. It is built in the Gothic or pointed style of architecture. I don't think that it can have been the one built by Edan O'Kelly in 1148 ; it belongs to a later period and was probably erected after the burning of the monastery in 1312.

But still standing there is another building not mentioned in the above list, perhaps, indeed, it was to it that they gave the name of pigeon-house. It is an old two-storeyed building, away behind the church, which was meant to serve the double purpose of oratory and sleeping apartment. This building is probably the earliest example still existing of the most perfect system of stone roofing employed by the Irish—we have the round barrel vault springing from the walls at a height of six feet and three quarters from the ground, and above it the pointed barrel vault both built on the regular arch principle ; the lower story is sixteen feet long, ten feet broad, and ten feet high ; the top storey is nine feet broad and eight feet high. A staircase through a quadrangular opening about twenty inches broad leads to the top storey. This, together with the style of arch, shows it to belong to a later period than St. Columba's house at Kells, in which the general plan is the same but the means of ascent is a ladder. The features of the door-way are nearly all destroyed but we can see that it was covered by a single stone lintel—this stone is now cracked across and if not looked after will soon disappear. The only window still perfect is that in the west end, 6 feet 8 inches high by four feet wide and is covered by a semicircular arch, it splays slightly inwards and has no decoration of any kind. There was another window in the east end of the top storey but there is nothing there now but the opening. There was also a door on the west end of the upper storey, but on that side from a little below the lower arch upwards, all the stones have been taken away, the joining stone of the upper vault alone being left. On the outside the building is twenty feet long, sixteen wide and about twenty high ; the coigns have all been taken away so that many of the features of the building have been destroyed. It may not be out of place here to say that during the last century more damage has been done to antiquities in this country than was done during all the preceding time since they were constructed. This is the work, not of the hand of time, but of the vandals of this enlightened age. Perhaps the greatest offenders are builders and contractors who, in order to obtain suitable stones for their work, think nothing of mutilating these ancient monuments. However, out of evil good very often comes. The removal of the corner-stones of the old building

brought to light one of those bullàn or holed stones used by the ancient Irish for oaths &c. It is at the south-west corner, is made of granite, and measures 23 inches in length by 16 in breadth by 8 in thickness. The hole is about 5 inches in diameter.

It is a pity that a building such as this could not be placed under the care of the Board of Works, and so saved from further destruction.

We have still in or about Louth a few relics of the monks' stay there. Near to the monastery is what is still called "The Monks' bathing place" where every morning they performed their ablutions. To it is ascribed the power of working cures. The name of the little village of Channonrock is another memorial of the monks. It is more properly "The Canons' Rock," and in the surveys and inquisitions is called *Patra Canonicorum*. There are some curious stone vaults in the graveyard attached to the ruins, one especially, very old, on which some time ago there was an Irish inscription. This inscription is now almost entirely effaced, but a few of the Irish letters may yet be distinguished.

We are told that St. Columba built a monastery at Louth, a short distance from that of St. Mochta.^{10, 14} In his "Life of St. Columba," St. Adamnan gives us a prophecy of St. Mochta's in which he foretold the birth of St. Columba, and that he should build a monastery separated from his own by a single hedge. Of this monastery the tradition still exists at Louth, and you will be shown a piece of gable-end upon a rising ground, a short distance from the old abbey, as the remains of it.

DEPENDENT MONASTERIES OF LOUTH.

The country around Louth was studded with monasteries, most of which were offshoots of the principal house, among them we may mention in the county Louth, Clonkeen, Killany, Clonkeehan, and Cnoc-na-Seangan, and in the present County Monaghan, Inniskeen and Mucksnamh.

CLONKEEN.

Clonkeen was thought by Archdall to be the same as Louth, but this is not so. In O'Hanlon's "Lives of the Irish Saints," there are several saints mentioned of Cluaincaion, but as there were two monasteries of the name in County Louth, and another in Queen's County, it is difficult to distinguish them. However, three are assigned with a great degree of probability to Clonkeen, County Louth; namely St. Aedhain, whose feast was kept on the first of January; St. Fiachra, Coll, July 25, and St. Arim on first of August, while one is assigned to Clonkeehan, County Louth, St. Dommog, whose feast fell on the twenty-sixth of April. During the ninth century Clonkeen had its own bishops—Martin, abbot and bishop, died in 836, Finan, bishop, in 860, and Crunmall in 880.¹

CLONKEEHAN.

Of Clonkeehan we have no further information. In the graveyard at Clonkeehan, in a very beautiful situation, there still stands the gable of a very old church.

KILLANY.

The monastery at Killany was founded and built by the great St. Enda of Aran. St. Enda was the son of Conall Roe, King of Oriel, a tract of country extending from Lough Erne to the Boyne at Drogheda. His mother, Bridget, was a granddaughter to Ronan, King of Ard-Cinnachta or Ferrard. Among the children of Conall there were at least six saints—St. Enda, St. Fanchea, St. Caireach Dergain, St. Libeus, St. Lochina and St. Darinea. Enda succeeded

his father as king, but, through the advice and influence of his sister, Fanchea, who was abbess of a convent at Rossory, he left the world to become a monk. His first step was to build a monastery at Killany which lay within his own dominions.^{11,5} During the progress of work a neighbouring prince, with whom the princes of Oriel had been at enmity, passed by with his followers; obeying the warlike instincts within him, which, as yet, had not been fully subdued, Enda on the spur of the moment called his followers together, but feeling on his head the mark of the tonsure which he had but lately received, he remembered the vows he had taken and returned quietly to his work.⁶ He afterwards journeyed through England and the continent and founded a monastery in Latium. On his return he landed at Drogheda where he founded a monastery; he stayed for some time in his own territory, living chiefly at Killany; but feeling himself called to a life of greater seclusion, he obtained from his brother-in-law, Aenghus, King of Munster, a grant of the isle of Arran. The school which he there founded was the most famous of all the Irish schools, and more saints were trained in Arran than in any other Irish monastery. His sister, St. Fanchea, also established a nunnery at Killany, and she was buried there.* The monastery of Killany is not mentioned in any of the Irish annals, but in the Martyrology of Tallaght. on the ninth of March, there is mentioned a St. Sedna who lived in this monastery about the beginning of the seventh century.

TERMONFECKIN.

The monastery of Termonfeckin, though at first it had no connection with Louth, seems, in the time of St. Malachy to have been subject to it. It was founded in 665, probably by St. Fechin of Fore.

In 1013 it was plundered by the Danes.¹ On Christmas night, 1025, it was burnt by O'Crichan of Farney.¹ In 1053 died Cormac O'Ruadrach archin-neach,¹ and in 1056, Suibhne O'Eoghan, archinneach.¹ Donough O'Carroll repaired the church and placed Canons Regular in it.¹² It seems at this time to have been placed under Louth, and soon after the Norman invasion it became a branch house of the monastery of Louth. In addition to the monastery there was also at Termonfeckin a convent founded by the MacMahons.⁹

CNOC-NA-SEANGAN.

Of the monasteries subject to Louth the most famous was Cnoc-na-Seangan, now called Knockabbey; it was built by Donough O'Carroll and Edan O'Kelly,¹ and consecrated by St. Malachy in 1148, the same year as the restored church at Louth.¹ In 1168 died the first abbot, Giolla Mochtbeo.⁹ In 1181 died the abbot Maeltuirc O'Dunan, who is numbered among the Irish saints.¹ Colgan tells us that he was the same as the famous martyrologist, Marianus O'Gorman, to whom he and other ecclesiastical writers are so much indebted. O'Gorman's martyrology is written in verse and is the principal source of our knowledge of the Irish saints; only one copy of it is now known to exist, and unhappily even this copy is not accessible to us, as it is in a library at Brussels. In 1417 the prior of Cnoc-na-Seangan, James Lockard, was fined because a mere Irishman, John M'Kennavane, was admitted into the community.⁹ In 1507, the then prior, James MacMahon, was made bishop of Derry.⁷ The monastery was dissolved in 1535.⁹ From the state papers of the reign of Queen Elizabeth,

* Archdall mentions a monastery called Killanche. I had thought that this monastery was the same as Killany, but by a recent article in the Dundalk "Examiner," I see that Killanche was situated between Collon and Ardee, and is now known as Ashville. It was founded by St. Enda, and was named after his sister Fanchea.

we find that it was granted to Nicholas Taaffe of Athclare castle, on condition that he would fortify it⁴; probably he failed to fulfil the conditions, for it was afterwards granted by James I. to one of the newly created baronets, Sir John King.⁹ There is now no trace of the monastery, but I am informed that there was a small fragment of one of the walls there in 1830.

INISMOCHT.

The monastery of Inismocht was thought by many writers to have been founded by St. Mochta of Louth, and to have been subject to that monastery. But I think this is not the case. It was founded by St. Mochta MacCearnaghan, a holy and learned priest of Armagh, whom the Four Masters call "Mochta of the Island." Lanigan blames Archdall for placing this monastery in County Louth, thinking that the latter's only reason was that it was called the "Island of Mochta." But in this, at least, Archdall was right, for there is really such a place as Inismocht in Louth. It is in the townland of Ballygowan, alongside the river Dee, about two miles from Ardee. There is the ruin of a very old church still there. It stands on an eminence about twenty perches in area. Formerly the Dee flowed on both sides of this eminence and even still it is surrounded with low, wet, marshy ground. I visited the place last January and at that time the field around the eminence was covered with water. Of the old church there are portions of three walls still standing; it is about twenty feet broad, and was formerly probably about thirty yards long, but the ruin which now stands is only about twenty yards in length. The bare outlines of what is said to have been the abbot's stall can still be seen. It is about five feet high and seems to have been covered with a pointed arch.

The death of St. Mochta MacCearnaghan is recorded in the Four Masters at the year 922, and his feast was kept on the 26th of March. The Danes found Inismocht a convenient camping ground and they often obtained possession of it. The winters at that time were much more severe than they are now, for we are told that the Dee several times became frozen. In 940 the Danes were able to cross on the ice and plunder the monastery.¹ They again had possession in 1026, for in that year O'Neill crossed on the ice and drove them out.¹ In 997 Oissene O'Machainen, lord of Maghdorna, was slain here by Maelseachlin.¹ During the civil wars between the rival claimants for the kingship, Inismocht narrowly escaped being again plundered. In 1138, Turlough O'Connor with his Ulster allies was met at Craebh Maighe Lorgaigh by Murchadh O'Maeleachlin king of Meath, assisted by Dermot MacMurrough and the Danes; they remained one whole week facing one another and then separated without fighting.¹ On their way home, the Meathmen ravaged Breffney and Farney, the chiefs of which territories, O'Ruairc and O'Carroll were allied with O'Connor: Inismocht was in the territory of O'Carroll, and after plundering Farney the Meathmen attacked the island. Those on the island, however, got vessels and defended themselves, and the Four Masters tell us that through the miracles of the patron saint, the aggressors were defeated with great loss. In 1150 O'Carroll, O'Ruairc and their followers held a conference here with Muircheartach O'Lochlin, the northern claimant for the High Kingship, and his followers.¹ I have noted down, though I don't remember from what source I got the information, that the monastery was finally destroyed and abandoned in 1172.

DROMISKIN.

Next in importance to Louth comes Dromiskin or more properly, Drominiscleann. Owing to the bungling of Archdall there has been a great deal of error

in connection with the history of this monastery. He confounded Drominiscleann with Drumshallon in the barony of Ferrard. We shall deal with them together, taking care however to give to each what belongs to it. Drumshallon was founded by St. Patrick, shortly after he left Tara, and was therefore one of the first monasteries founded in Ireland. Among its abbots are numbered St. Lugaid, son of Aengus, King of Cashel, the king whose foot St. Patrick pierced with his crozier. St. Lugaid died in 575 and his feast was kept on the second of November.^{10,11}

Dromiskin was founded early in the seventh century by St. Ronan, son of Bearagh a chieftain of Conall Murthemne.¹ He died in 664 and was honoured on November 18.¹ In 801 his relics were placed on a shrine of gold and silver, and were held in high reverence.¹ To those abbots who flourished during the ninth century, the Four Masters give the title of bishops. In 827, died Murchiu abbot and bishop, and in 876, Tigernach bishop.¹ In 827, died Cormac abbot, but I don't know whether he belonged to Dromiskin or Drumshallon.⁹ In 876, the Ard-Righ, Aedh Finnliath, son of Niall Caille died here.¹ In 913 a terrible scene occurred in the refectory of the monastery.¹ The tanist of Conal Muirthemne, Gairblith Mac Muireadhaig, was visiting the abbot Muireadhaig, when the house was surrounded by Conghalach lord of Conall Muirthemne and his followers, and both Gairblith and Muireadhaig were killed. However, the annalists tell us that through the prayers of the monks and the intercession of St. Ronan, this sacrilege was not allowed to go unpunished, for within the space of three months Conghalach himself was slain by his own subjects. We read in the Annals of the Four Masters that in 948 Dromiskin was spoiled by the O'Neills. In 968 it was seized by the Danes, but they were soon driven out by Domhnall, king of Ailech; the same year however it was seized and plundered by Murchadh O'Flaherty.¹ In 1043 it was plundered by O'Ruairc but the vengeance of Ronan overtook him, for within three months he was slain. I think that soon afterwards the monastery passed into the hands of the monks of the church of the Holy Trinity in Dublin.⁹ The last we read in connection with it is that in 1176 the crozier of St. Ronan was taken from the Irish by Roger le Poër.

I don't think that any portion of the monastery now exists, though I read somewhere that a piece of it was incorporated in some wall. There is a piece of an old Celtic cross in the graveyard, but the inscription on it has been obliterated. We have also here a portion of what is said to have been once the largest round tower in Ireland; what now remains is about forty feet high, and is covered with a conical roof of modern date; the doorway is formed of large stones, and is headed with a semicircular arch of five very large stones. It was built probably late in the ninth century by Colman MacAillil, abbot of Clonmacnoise, who was a native of Dromiskin.¹³

The following topographical remarks, abridged from some notes by Major-Gen. Stubbs, in the Record of the Kilkenny Archæological Society, 1889, may be of interest :—

Dromiskin, or more properly Drominesclann, means the ridge of the pure stream. There was a small stream running from St. Ronan's well, or Tober Ronan, which lay a little south-west of the monastery through Ballyshone to the sea. Between Tober Ronan and Ballyshone, which is directly west of the abbey, there were formerly about forty wells. This stream is called in the Ordnance Survey, *Scputa na bh-á-Úaig* or Babe's stream. The Babes were lords of Darver and Dromiskin, about 200 years ago.

West of the monastery is a bog called the Red Bog. The Irish name is Tuolach. This bog contains a coannog—a great rarity in County Louth.

To the east of the Red Bog is a hill called *Mullaḍ lún*—the hill of the spear. Five hundred yards further, in a southerly direction, is a spot where three roads meet, commonly called *Crois-na-fuile* or the Bloody Cross Roads.

Five or six hundred yards further south, there is a small rise in the ground called *Cleggandinna*—the hill of the skulls. Over fifty years ago a large number of bones and skulls were exhumed between Mullaghlinn and Cleggandinna. This, together with the peculiar names, seems to point to the fact of a battle having been fought here. There is a tradition that there was a battle fought during Cromwell's wars, but more probably it was the battle fought in the year 212, in which Fergus Dubdheatach, in his retreat after the battle of Criona, was met and defeated by the forces of Cormac Mac Art.

Many years ago some small cell-like rooms, opening into one another, were found in Mullaghlinn, and also near a small rath adjacent to the village. They probably belonged to the monastery. This rath may possibly mark the grave of Aedh Finnliath, the Ard-Righ, who died at Dromiskin. To the south-west of the monastery is the place called Gallows-Hill, from the gallows which once stood there. Near by is a hill which bore the name of *Cnoc-na-Ṣneadais* or *Cnoc-na-Ṣacḍarḍ*—The Hill of the Tears or Clapping—from the keening of the women during the executions.

LANNLEIRE.

Lannleire has been identified by Dr. Reeves with Dunleer. I don't think that any other of the County Louth monasteries gets as frequent mention in the annals as does this one. It was founded by St. Forodrain, the son of Moenan,¹¹ whose feast as well as that of his brother, St. Baithin, who succeeded him, were kept on June 18. After these two, the first abbot we have mention of is Maenach O'Mooney who died in 721. Thenceforth the names of the abbots are regularly given. In 828 Lannleire was burnt by the Danes. At the year 843 the Four Masters note the death of Gormgal Mac Mureadhaigh of Lannleire, bishop and anchorite. The death of another bishop, Maelciarnan MacForchern is mentioned at the year 900. In the year 921 died Cuongalta a priest who was famous throughout all Ireland for his knowledge, voice, and personal appearance.¹ This same year 921, the monastery was plundered. In the year 940 it was destroyed during a foray made on Bregia. In 968 the refectory was burnt by Domnall MacMurchadh and 400 persons were destroyed.¹ In 1002 it was plundered by the Uimeith, but on their way home they were overtaken by the men of Bregia and all were either killed or led captive. It was again plundered in 1050 and finally burnt in 1148.¹

ANNAGASSAN.

Another very important monastery was that of Annagassan, known under the ancient name of Linn Duachaill. This monastery was founded by St. Colman MacLuachan who was of the Hy Nail race.⁶ The place was called Linn Duachaill from a demon named Machaill or Duachaill who lived here and annoyed the people until St. Colman rid them of his presence. Linn Duachaill means "Duachaill's Pool; the word "Casan" meaning "paths" was afterwards prefixed on account of the junction of the Dee and Glyde here, and the place came to be called Casan-Linne. Afterwards, probably when the foreigners made fords on the rivers, it was called Ath-na-gcasan, or Annagassan—"the ford of

the Paths." The word Linn still survives in the " Pass of Lynns " near which, as tradition attests, the monastery stood. St. Colman died in 699,⁶ and his feast was kept on the 30th March. The next abbot we have mention of is Siadhail who died in 752. Next came Anfadhan who died in 758; Suarlech in 775; Thomas, who was a bishop and scribe, in 803, and Clemens in 826.¹ After these came Comman or Caemhan the last abbot. The foreigners arrived here in 841 and attacked the monastery.¹ The Four Masters tell us that they killed and burnt the abbot, and there is a tradition still extant to the effect that all the monks fled, but that the abbot who was very old and had to proceed slowly, was captured and roasted on a gridiron. The Annals of Ulster, in which the event is placed at 842, say that several recreant Irish took part in this atrocious deed. I don't think it is out of place here to trace the history of the foreign encampment at Annagassan to its close. The foreigners who plundered the monastery were called Fionghoill, or the " Fair-haired Foreigners." They were Norwegians, and were not the same as the Danes who arrived soon after and who were called Dubhghoill or Black Foreigners. They made a fort at Annagassan, and were soon joined by another large fleet of their countrymen; making this place their principal encampment, they made raids through the whole country. In 841 they plundered Clonmacnoise, and in 842 they ravaged Clogher and took Moran, the abbot, prisoner. In 849 there arrived at Annagassan a large fleet of Dubhghoill who slaughtered the others and took possession of their encampment. The Irish, however, gained nothing by the change. In 850 the Dubhghoill of Annagassan wasted Armagh, and for the next eighty years they continued their ravages. The arrival however of a fresh fleet of them in 926, roused the Irish of the surrounding country, and the Danes sustained, at a place called Cluain-na-cruimthir, in the neighbourhood of Annagassan, a crushing defeat.² The Irish followed up their victory with so much success that the following year, 927, the Danish fleet left Annagassan.² On August 7th, O'Hanlon mentions St. Temnen of Linnduachail.

DRUMCAR.

Drumcar was founded probably by St. Patrick's nephew, St. Nectan, whose feast was held on May 2. We know very little about Drumcar. In 816 died Ceallach MacMurgheis the abbot, and in 868, Connle, a holy anchorite.¹ There are at Drumcar the remains of a church of fairly modern date, and in the graveyard is a tombstone with an Irish inscription. The patron day is July 29th.

CLONMORE.

Clonmore was founded by St. Columba, who placed over it one of his disciples, St. Oisene.⁶ O'Hanlon places the feast of this saint on the 1st of January. In 826 Clonmore was burnt by the Danes, and the archinneach Robhartaigh MacCathasach was killed.¹ In 1017 Flaithbeartach Mac Murchertach was abbot.¹ Clonmore is generally called in the annals, Clonmor-arda. It is in the barony of Ferrard, and the graveyard contains the ruin of a very old church. The feast of St. Columba, June 9th, is kept here.

KILLCLOGHER.

There was a monastery at Clogher-head founded by St. Nectan whose feast was held on May 2nd.¹¹ It was built on the eminence which gives the name to the place. Among its abbots was St. Donachad, of the race of Conall Gulban, who in 713 was transferred to the abbacy of Hy and who died in 719.¹⁰ He was venerated as the patron of Clogher-head, and sailors, when in danger were accustomed to invoke him. His feast was held on May 25th.

DYSART.

This monastery was founded by St. Patrick who placed over it St. Dachonna. Dachonna had been appointed over a church in Tyrone, but as he was a native of Louth, St. Patrick transferred him to the other. The place was thence called Daire-disirt-Dachonna; i.e. the Oak-wood of the place of penance of Dachonna.^{7, 11} Dachonna died in 506 and his feast was kept on April 12th. We know nothing more of this monastery, but the Four Masters tell us that in the year 846, Tigernach, king of Lagore in Meath, gained a great victory over the Danes at this place.

FAUGHART.

At a very early date there was a monastery at Faughart for Canons Regular.³ O'Hanlon, at September 14, mentions St. Sarbile of Faughart.

DROMIN.

Dromin was founded by St. Finnian and was a branch house of the great monastery of Moville. The incident of the copying of St. Finnian's manuscript by St. Columba which is said to have brought on the battle of Cooldrenhne, occurred here. Lanigan and others deny the truth of this story altogether. That the incident occurred, however, I think we cannot doubt, but I think also had it never occurred, the battle of Cooldrenhne would have been fought.^{3, 10, 14} Dromin was burnt by the Danes in 834.¹ The feast of St. Finnian on the 12th October is still kept as a holiday, and there is a well bearing his name near by. On the site of the monastery there is a very old church, belonging probably to about the twelfth century. Hard by is a fine old fort, and the modern chapel is famous on account of having been built between two showers. From several points in the neighbourhood of Dromin, a fine view of the whole County Louth may be obtained.

TULLYALLEN.

There was a monastery at Tullyallen founded by St. Colman who died in 726.¹⁰ O'Hanlon mentions two saints of this monastery—St. Mochelloc who is honoured on January 23rd and St. Molucca whose feast fell on August 7th.

DROGHEDA.

Then we have the old abbey at Drogheda which afterwards came into the hands of the Augustinians. It was probably the one founded by S. Edna,⁵ and occupied a site between West street and the Boyne. Curiously enough, the histories of no less than two other monasteries have been requisitioned, in order to provide something noteworthy about this Drogheda abbey, itself devoid of almost any history. All that the annalists tell of the monastery of Treoit or Trevet in Meath has been put to the credit of this one; also, on account of the fact that Mellifont abbey was sometimes called the abbey of Drogheda,⁸ an attempt was made to deprive it of a few of the more noteworthy facts of its history, such as the Synod of Cardinal Papiro and the death of Devorgilla. Needless to say the Drogheda abbey has no claim to any of these. At a Synod held in England in 1217, at which, we are told, all the Irish abbots attended, the abbot of Drogheda was deprived of his abbey.⁸ At the dissolution this monastery was handed over to the mayor and the citizens.⁹

RUSGACH.

At the 18th September, the Martyrology of Donegal mentions St. Mael-caemhgin of Rusgach in Cuailgne, which was the name given to a portion of

north Louth. The nearest resemblance to this name is Rosskey, and we know that there was formerly a church at Rosskeagh, for in 1305 the prior of Louth sued Nicholas Netterville for the advowson of it.⁴ More probably it is Rossmakea, where, in the graveyard, there are old ruins to which tradition gives the name of "The Abbey."*

MONASTERBOICE

Was founded by St. Buite who died December 7th, 521. It was destroyed by fire in 1017, but there is a later reference in the Four Masters to the death of its abbots in 1117.

MELLIFONT

Was founded by Donough O'Carroll and St. Malachy in 1142. Christian O'Conarchy, afterwards the celebrated bishop of Lismore, was first abbot. Mellifont was dissolved in 1542, and granted to Sir Gerald Moore.

Many of the monasteries disappeared during the 11th and 12th centuries without any record being left of their dissolution.

(To be continued.)

ῥορκᾶν ἢ. ὡς μνηρεῶσις.

Authorities: and their Reference Numbers.

- 1 Four Masters.
- 2 Annals of Ulster.
- 3 Trias Thaumaturga.
- 4 State Papers.
- 5 Dr. Healy.
- 6 Colgan.
- 7 Ware.
- 8 Dalton.
- 9 Archdall.
- 10 Lanigan.
- 11 O'Hanlon.
- 12 Ferguson.
- 13 Records of Kilkenny Archæological Society.
- 14 O'Donnell's Life of St. Columbkille.

* Since writing the above I have found that at a place called Rooskey, near Carlingford, there is a graveyard containing the remains of an old church. There can be no doubt that this is the place referred to.

TABULAR LIST OF THE PRE-NORMAN MONASTERIES.

Abbey.	Founder.	Date of Foundation.	Date of Dissolution.
Louth ..	St. Mochta ..	About 454 ..	Reformation.
Clonkeen ..	— ..	— ..	—
Clonkeehan ..	— ..	5th or 6th Century ..	—
Killany ..	St. Enda ..	About 500 ..	—
Killanche ..	St. Enda ..	About 500 ..	—
Inismocht ..	St. Mochta MacCear- naghan ..	About 900 .. 1148 ..	1172 .. Reformation.
Cnocnaseangan ..	Edan O' Kelly ..	— ..	—
Dromiskin ..	St. Ronan ..	Before 665 ..	—
Drumshallon ..	St. Patrick ..	432 ..	—
Drumcar ..	St. Nectan (?) ..	About 500 (?) ..	—
Clonmore ..	S.S. Columba and Oissene ..	About 550 ..	—
Faughard ..	— ..	— ..	—
Termonfeckin ..	St. Feckin (probably) ..	665 ..	—
Dromin ..	St. Finnian ..	Before 550 ..	Burnt in 834
Tullyallen ..	St. Colman ..	About 700 ..	—
Drogheda ..	St. Enda (?) ..	— ..	Reformation.
Annagassan ..	St. Colman ..	7th Century ..	840
Dysart ..	S.S. Patrick and Dachonna ..	450 ..	—
Dunleer ..	S.S. Forodrain and Baithen ..	— ..	1148
Killclogher ..	St. Nechtan ..	About 500 ..	—
Monasterboice ..	St. Buite ..	About 500 ..	1017 ?
Mellifont ..	St. Malachy ..	1142 ..	Reform'n(1540)
Rusgach ..	— ..	— ..	—





MUIREDACH'S CROSS, MONASTERBOICE.





Some Souterrains of Louth.



UT along the leading road from Dundalk to Carrick stands Mount Ash, perhaps the princeliest of the ancient forts of Louth. Visitors are always impressed by the magnificent view, or rather series of views, obtainable from Mount Ash. Westwards in the track of the sunset we see the little hills of Monaghan peeping up one behind the other; to the south, till far-off Collon interrupts the view, the rich verdant plain of Louth is unfolded in all its luxuriance; a turn to the north places us face to face with an unrivalled piece of mountain scenery; looking eastwards, a few tall chimneys tell us where Dundalk is, with the beautiful bay stealing in towards the trees, and the broad blue sea beyond.

But visitors might come and go and little dream that right in the immediate vicinity of their stand-point—certainly not outside a one mile radius—there are upwards of twenty underground structures of stone, some of them very capacious and all interesting if only because neither their origin or purpose is yet precisely known. These structures are called in the technical language of archæologists souterrains (a Frenchified form of subterranean), and by the people “caves.” The mode of constructing them seems to have been to dig or quarry a trench sometimes ten or twelve and sometimes only four feet deep, winding, sinking or rising according as did the upper surface; then, to build at bottom of this trench two parallel walls about four feet high and three feet apart, cover over with flat stones and pitch clay and rubble back in again. As a rule the passages thus formed terminate in a chamber, the walls gradually diverging and then meeting so as to enclose an almost circular space. Since no flat stones of manageable proportions could be found large enough and at the same time strong enough to make a roof, the walls of these chambers were built not straight up, but with each succeeding layer of stones projecting inwards till the opening above was sufficiently small to be covered by an ordinary flat stone. Hence it was not by design, but from the necessities of the case, that these chambers assumed the well-known bee-skep form.

Another almost invariable feature of the souterrain is the peculiar division of their long corridor passages. One is brought face to face with the blank wall, and if unacquainted with these structures, at once imagines that here the passage terminates. But there is usually more to be seen, a trap-door opening—through the floor or through the roof—will bring him into another corridor.

But it is time to get to particulars. In Mr. Henry Lennon's farm—three-quarters of a mile west from Mount Ash—is the second largest cave in this neighbourhood (see figure II. for ground plan). Entrance is easily effected by removing flat stone right above the spot marked C, and the explorer finds himself—supposing he has not tumbled through lower opening at C—in a passage twenty-two feet long running north-west then due north. At B the roof has fallen in, but it is unlikely that the passage extended much farther in that direction. Here a chamber opens to the left, the further end of which is five feet broad and $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet high. The curving passage D is simply indescribable, it is hewn through the rock, and is angular, jagged, low, and very uncomfortable, but chamber E is well worth seeing. Roughly, it is circular in outline, with an average diameter of nine feet; the natural rock forms the wall for about two feet up, when building with the inward curve commences, till at the highest point—five and a half feet from the floor—two large flat stones finish the cell. When we bear in mind the space to be domed in, the wall of uncemented stone, the vicissitudes of twice ten hundred years so well withstood, this chamber be-speaks our tribute of admiration to the skill of the long dead builder. The total length of this cave is seventy-four feet.

Fig. III. gives plan of a cave in the lawn at Tullagee House, its total length is only fifty-three feet, but the curious outline and the relative positions of its chambers make it interesting. The floors of A and B are on the same level, and while the chambers themselves are both five feet high, they are connected by a curious little half-moon shaped passage whose height is only two and a half feet. At C we have traces of the upward opening through the floor of another passage, now destroyed.

Yet another type, if it be not unique, is that shewn in figure IV. It is situated in one of Mr. MacEntegart's fields and is within a shout of Mount Ash. Its entire length is eighty-five feet. The complete absence of curving may be accounted for by the fact that the cave is cut through the natural rock. Chamber A is ten feet long, five feet high, and five and a half feet broad; its vertical section is shewn in figure F, also an air shaft (so we think), running across roof of chamber in the direction of the dotted lines (see A again) and continued to a length of twenty-nine feet. At D the dotted line indicates a sort of partition, formed by leaving a cross section of the rock about nine inches thick, this was then partially battered down apparently by a blunt instrument so as to make an opening of about twenty-two inches square. The usual trap-door opening is shewn at C. The explorer who finds this cave so ready of access, and so clean, should not forget that he owes these conveniences to a body of local antiquaries* whose enthusiasm stood the practical test of much hard work. Chambers X and E were completely filled up, so also was half of passage C, while that portion from B till the entrance to A was in entire collapse, the floor being buried under ten feet of solid earth. Tons of clay had to be bailed up by means of a rope and bucket, portions of new wall had to be made in places where builder had to lie on his side and could only use one hand. But it is to be hoped the result is worth the toil.

* Messrs. Patrick Caffrey, John Kearney, Patrick and Joseph Murray, John Finegan, P. Kellidy, and B. Walsh. This work of repair dragged along for three weeks, beginning always when the day's work was done, and other folks were taking their ease by the fireside; ten o'clock didn't ever see the spades left by. No wonder they were tired of the undertaking; when all was completed the writer innocently suggested that there was another fine cave in the vicinity badly in need of attention, and was answered, "For the Lord's sake, let us make a new one."

Fig. V. shows cave smaller than any, yet it has the double distinction of being the pattern most generally met with, and of being "positively the latest." It is situated in Mr. Brannigan's farm, Carrickallen, and was discovered only last spring. The oldest local tradition held no account of it—not so with the others—and in chamber A the rain-drops filtering down through the roof, had rounded the gravel beneath like pebbles from the beach, while in one place a constant drop had cut a hole three quarters of an inch deep in the rock floor. Everything seemed to have been undisturbed for centuries, and if ever these caves yield a "find," this one should. But only a few crumbling bones were met with. The roof is fallen at C, leaving present entire length about forty-eight feet. Exactly like this one, but in every respect larger, is another in Mr. John Watter's farm, Carrickmullan, and another in the railway embankment a little beyond "Kelly's bridge."

In Mr. John Kelledy's land, only a few hundred yards from "the Mount," is a very large cave which cannot now be located. They tell that the tallest man in the county with his tall hat on—they wore them in those days—could stand upright in it, and that more than fifty years ago, an old beggar-man took up his summer residence in it and "was beholden to no one for his night's lodging."

To return to Mount Ash* ; this is a tumulus, saucer-shaped on top. People not so old remember it almost level, and one naturally concludes that some internal structure has subsided ; this is so. Last year an opening was discovered (thanks to a fox) on the western side, and a passage running towards the centre was revealed. About six yards in, the roof had collapsed and advance was impossible. The oldest inhabitant says he remembers to have seen a deep hole, straight down, lined with stones "just like a well," somewhere near the centre of the "mount," he thinks ; but it is a long time since it was covered over, and he cannot be definite now as to its location. This is a pity : perhaps some grand old pagan chief was buried there, clad in all his panoply of war, standing with his face to the enemy. We shall now leave the reader to turn to other subjects, with the hope that he has been interested in these local monuments, telling us darkly how some of the needs of long gone ages and an earlier race were catered for.

Δη τὰς αἰρὶ S ἡδ Cuinn.

* For the benefit of those who might wish a fuller list, there are two souterrains (not including one already noted) in Mr. Lennon's farm, one each in the farms of Messrs. Peter Hughes, J.P., Owen Fagan, James M'Donnell, Patrick Rice, James M'Enteggart, and Brian Curtis, and further investigation would doubtless reveal others.



Plans of Souterrains ^{Fig I}

in the
Neighbourhood
of

Knockbridge

County Louth.

Scale $\frac{1}{16}$ " to 1 foot.

Fig. IV

Cross
Section
at D

ENTRANCE

Longitudinal
Section
of
Chamber A.

? Airshaft

pass

Cross Section at a

Airshaft (?)

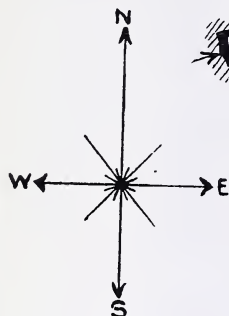


Fig. II.

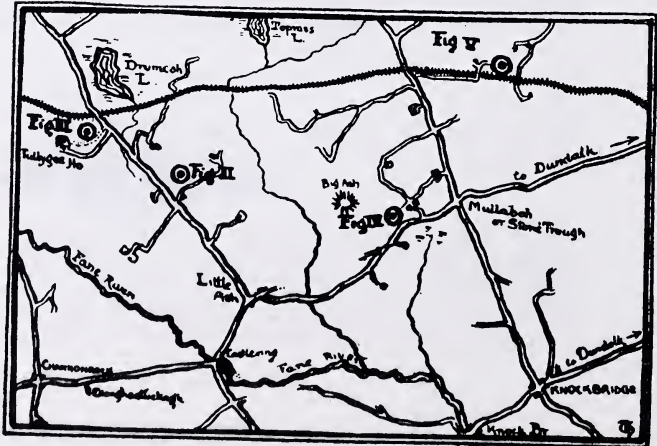
Fig III

Fig V

Map of DISTRICT

The positions of the souterrains
are indicated below by⊙
and the number of the figure to which
each refers.

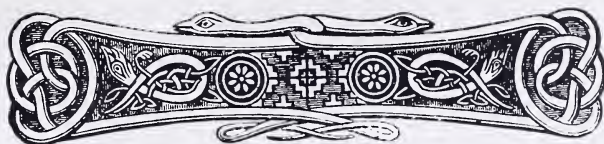
Roads —, Rivers ~~, Railway —+—+—.



Scale of Map.

Miles
July, 1904.

Prepared from Drawings
by H. G. Tompkins



COMLUÉD SEANDACHTA LUĞMAIGE.

Sluairimír feartha 'n ár plóigíob
 A bailiugað pean-rgeolta an Mága^a
 Ó Bhúg^b aeórac denguir coir bóinne^c
 So Caol-Uirge^d 'oiteorainn lúbair
 Trága ;^e

Ná fásaimír túr ann san fairséal,
 Ná fásaimír leacé ann 'ná lior,
 Ná fásaimír cairteán 'ná cairéal
 San cúir a mbunúdair éur i bhfor.

Ir rialmar, feuramuit Mag^a Muir-
 ténne

Ir ór-buirde 'n t-ardar ann ran
 bfoghmar,
 Acé i oteannta na mbarrái ó'n itir,
 Ta raotar pean-ghaodal ann go leor:
 Tá uaiméanna téirdeann cúrrái fáda
 faoi'n otalam, 'r leacacla dá noion,
 Ir réompaí san dol in-a mballaib
 In a gcomnuirdeann san máirg
 rluas-íróe.

Deir úgdaí deas-áimínte in árracé
 Supb iongantac tar bárrí iao pean-
 ghairóil

So fonnmar cóg dúin ruar anáiríoe
 Agus túrta san áiream ran tír ;
 Ar feuc ar an roilg atá 'suinn,
 Coir bóinn' ir gólám le n-a taoib,
 Ir oraoi-leac éun iotbairt págánac,
 So díreac le lámh Roir na Ríog.^f

Ar ca bfuil an té ná béad bhróu air
 'Oo téirdeann do'n mheadóig^g inr an
 gcúm,

I n-ár máir, i n-ár oibruí go slóimhar
 Inr an aimir fáo ó, na naom-úirí ?
 Infiúctar gac doirar ir áir ann,

Ir na cloca tá gearrta san béim,
 'S beir iongha, dar liom', ar gac
 rár-fear
 faoi rún-ílaeo ir ceárvuigeacé na
 nghaodal.

Agur téirémir go mainiríoir buíte^h
 I n-ár máir flannⁱ na laoiríoe fáo ó
 'S ná fásaimír cpor san cpaob-
 rghaileacé,

A míniugað gac bhuí baineas leo ;
 Ir cuaradaimír uaim atá lám leir
 An mainiríoir árra na naom,
 Agur rcpídmír do'n muintir nar táimíg
 Ar époríoe-éion ir éráibteacé na
 nghaodal.

Ná fásam an t-ác i n-ár érearráir
 Cúculainn,^j 'na péarrain an treon,
 Ir o'fás 'suinn dá bárrí ran mar ainm
 áit'roí^k ar ár mbaile go deo ;
 Ná fásaimír cuair ann coir leara—
 Ná bíor ann áit cacla, ná gleoró—
 Ná cloca áro-díreac 'na resam
 San tuairpírg le cao a bain leo.

Domnall O Loingsí.

1.—magá. Magh Muirtemne, The Plain of Muirtemne, the early name of County Louth: applied to the plain stretching from the foot of Slieve Gullion to the Boyne at Drogheda; or as others bound it, though with less evidence, to the range of hills at Collon, extending from Slieve Breagh in Meath to the Sea at Clogherhead.

2.—bhúg. Brugh na Boinne. Brugh of the Boyne, the district covered by the mounds of Dowth, Newgrange, and Knowth—the burial place of the Pagan Kings of Ireland—and in tradition the abode and fairy palace of the De Danann Gods, the Dagda and Angus Og.

3.—Caol uirge. Narrow Water, the northern mearing between Louth and Down, inland, west of Omeath, on the Newry river.

[NOTES, continued.]

- 4.—*ιυδαρη Τριάζα*, the yew tree of the strand, Newry. The full name of this place is *ιυδαρη Ἐκκλησία Τριάζα*—the yew tree at the head of the strand, meaning the line of high water. The modern word is the first of the original name with the article, as is so usual, attached. The spot derives its name from an ancient yew tree, said to have been planted there by St. Patrick, which flourished till A.D. 1162, when the Four Masters record its destruction in a fire.
- 5.—*Βόϊνν*. The Boyne. The legend of the origin of the river is that its source was There is a legend of the eruption of the river from Trinity Well, at the foot of Carbury hill (Side Nectain), in County Kildare, which is still its primary source. It was forbidden to a woman to raise the stone that covered it, but Boin, the wife of Nectain, disregarded the spell, and the waters rose up to drown her; she ran from them, and the stream followed in the course where it has ever since flowed, and finally overtook and engulfed her on the shore of the sea. The new river was given the name of its victim Boinn, which English pronunciation, disregarding the Irish sound, and following the spelling according to English pronunciation, has corrupted into Boyne.
- 6.—*Ρορ να Ριοῦς*. Rosnaree, a ford of the Boyne, between Drogheda and Slane, famous as the spot to which King Cormac MacArt's bier was carried by the flood, when his chieftains sought to bury it against his dying command in the mound of his Pagan ancestors. The site of his grave is still pointed out, in accordance with local tradition, near the south bank of the river.
- 7.—*ματτός*, the Mattock River which flows by Mellifont Abbey.
- 8.—*μοναστηριον βυιτᾶ*. Monasterboice, the Monastery of St. Buithe, of which the antiquity and fame are so great, although so few records remain of its history.
- 9.—*ῥῑανν*. Flann of the Monastery, the great luminary of Monasterboice, widely celebrated in Irish literature as poet, chronicler and scholar. He was the chief lay professor at the school of Monasterboice, and died in A.D. 1056. Many of his poems (chiefly historical and genealogical) as well as his prose works remain, and it should be the task of some member of the County Louth Archæological Society to edit and illustrate these remains of Louth's greatest scholar.
- 10.—*Κυκουλανν*, the chieftain and hero of Muirtemne—the greatest glory of our county in all history and legend hardly needs a note here.
- 11.—*Ἀρδ' ἤρθε*, a contracted [form of *Ἀρδ' ἐφ' ἤρθε*]. Ardee, the scene of Cuculainn's most famous exploit—the Fight at the Ford with Ferdia.





Castle Guard, Ardee.



ABOUT a quarter of a mile south-east of Ardee stands the remarkable mound locally known as "The Priest's Mount," and marked on the ordnance map as "Dawson's Fort," but whose real name is "Castle Guard," which latter name is but the rendering in English of the sound of the Irish name, "Caiseal Guth-aird," i.e., the stone fort of the high voice.

Seen from the road the mound apparently presents no features of special interest, but on nearer approach and inspection one is forcibly impressed with the huge expenditure of human labour that its erection must have entailed at a time when modern mechanical appliances were undreamt of. Gigantic as its proportions appear at the present day, they compare unfavourably with its former size, for Wright in his "Louthiana" states that—"the perpendicular height of the mount from the bed of its foundation is nearly 90ft., and the depth of the main trench between 30 and 40; the circumference at the top is not less than 140 and round the foundations upwards of 600 feet." At the present time the height does not exceed 50 feet—possibly not quite so much—while the circumference at the top is much nearer 200 than 140 feet.

Mr. Dolan, in whose possession it is at present, informed me that about 80 years ago it was owned by a Dr. Blackhall, who built a summer-house on top; and subsequently by a Parish Priest—Rev. Canon Lévin, P.P.—who planted a hedge round the summit. From the latter owner it no doubt derived its present local name. Judging by the reduced height, and the enlarged circumference of the top, it is evident that some of the upper portion has been removed since Wright's time (1748).

It is most likely that the main trench which that writer states to have been between 30 and 40 feet deep, and which is now barely 5 feet in depth, has been filled with material taken from the top of the mound. At the period of Wright's description the mound was encircled by a double ditch and vallum, and on its summit were still traceable the foundations of two concentric octagonal buildings—the interior one being probably a tower or castle and the outer a kind of breast-work or parapet. The remains of the double circumvallation can still be distinctly traced, but no vestige remains of the foundations on the summit.

Evidently much impressed by the size and appearance of this remarkable structure, Wright goes on to say that "this is manifestly a work of great labour, and undoubtedly designed at first for a memorial of something worthy of being long remembered"; and then concludes that it must have been a sepulchral

monument or burial-place of some of the Irish kings. It is abundantly clear, both from Wright's description and from the appearance of the place itself, that it must have been designed and constructed with a special view to its defence against an enemy. Indeed, at the period of its construction, and for many centuries afterwards, it must have been considered practically impregnable; for the defences are (or rather were) such that a small garrison could keep at bay an entire army, unless starvation or modern engines of destruction were employed against it. The fact that it is surrounded by a double ditch indicates that it was a royal rath or dun, for it is expressly laid down in the "Crith Gabhlach," an ancient law tract, that the dun of a king could not by law have less than two surrounding walls with water between. It is interesting to remark that **this** law was rigidly observed in the construction of the royal raths at Tara.

As to when or by whom the mound was originally constructed there is now no reliable evidence forthcoming. I would however hazard the suggestion that the following translation of a passage in the *Leabhar na h Uidhre* (*Tain bo Chuailgne*) may not be unconnected with its foundation. "The four provinces of Erin made a dun and an encampment in the *Brisleach Mor* in the plain of *Muirtheimhne*." Whether or not this passage accounts for its origin future research may determine, but that it was the scene of a very important episode in Irish history I shall, I hope, succeed in showing.

After the conversion of the Irish to Christianity by St. Patrick, it became necessary to bring the code of laws in use in ancient Erin into harmony with the principles of the new faith. For this purpose a "royal commission" was constituted—and a right royal commission it undoubtedly was—consisting as it did of three kings, three bishops and three men learned in law and science, as is recorded in the *Seanchus Mor* itself, the great book containing the revised code resulting from their labours.

"Laeghaire, Corc, Dairi the hardy
Patrick, Benen, Cairneach the just.
Rossa, Dubhthach, Ferghus with science.
These were the nine pillars of the *Seanchus Mor*."

The following is a translation of the opening paragraph of the introduction to this famous book:—

"The place of this Poem and the place of the *Seanchus* was *Teamhair*, in the summer and in the autumn, on account of its cleanness and pleasantness in these seasons; and *Rath-guthaird*, where the stone of Patrick is at this day, in *Glenn-na-mbodhur*, near *Nith nemonnach*, was the place during winter and spring, on account of the nearness of its fire-wood and its water, and on account of its warmth in the time of winter's cold."

In a note to the above passage the learned Dr. O'Donovan states: "Nith was the ancient name of the river of Ardee; flowing through the plains of *Conaill Muirtheimhne* in the county of Louth." The irruption of the river Nith into the plain of *Magh Murtheimhne* is mentioned in the *Annals of the Four Masters* under the year 4169, A.M. The following passage from the "*Brisleach Mor Magh Murtheimhne*" attests the accuracy of O'Donovan's judgment. "Conchobhar said, 'I know: take him (*Cuchulainn*) this day into *Glenn-na-mbodhar*'" (i.e., the glen of the Deaf, so called for the reason that were all the men of Erin round about it and loudly uttering their cries of war, yet might none in that glen hear either shout or halloo).

Mr. Peter O'Brien, of Stabannon National School, told me that he often heard

his father speaks of Glenmore as the name of a place near Smarmore, and the old man on being questioned by Mr. Dolan replied, without any suggestion being made to him, that he heard of the name as belonging to some place about or beyond Glen Kieran. He however made it rather Cluain Mor. Perhaps from personal knowledge or local enquiry some reader of this Journal may be able to throw additional light on the situation of the place which bears this name. The place called Rath-guthaird, i.e. the rath of the high voice is undoubtedly Castle Guard. Caiseals (or Cashels) i.e., stone forts, did not come into use in Ireland until about the middle of the seventh century ; so that at the period of the compilation of the Seanchus Mor, A.D. 438 to 441, it would be simply Rath-guthaird and not Caiseal-guthaird. That a Caiseal subsequently occupied the summit of the mound there is the authority of Wright for asserting. It is very natural to think that on the erection of the Caiseal the name changed from Rath-guthaird to Caiseal-guthaird—a name it still bears. An almost parallel instance of such a change of name may be cited in the case of Cathair-dun-iascaig, the ancient name of Cahir in the county of Tipperary, where the cathair was built on the dun, both names however being in this instance retained in the Irish name.

Of the "Stone of Patrick" I have been unable to trace any remains. Hancock, the editor of the Seanchus Mor, states that there is marked on the ordnance map near Nobber, at the source of the Nith, a place called Patrick's Stone, and on this authority alone he places Rath-guthaird at a fort called Lis-anawer at this spot. He states that he examined the course of the Nith from its source to its mouth by the aid of the map but was unable to discover Rath-guthaird. His failure is, no doubt, due to the circumstance mentioned above, that the name given on the ordnance map is "Dawson's Fort" and not "Castle Guard."

Standing on the summit of the mound and looking eastward along the valley which, no doubt, once bore the name of Glenn-na-mbodhar, through which the Dee winds its way to the sea, may be described the Catholic Church, Stabbannon, which still commemorates the name of one of the illustrious "nine pillars of the Seanchus Mor," viz., Benen or Beignus, who, of Munster origin, was St. Patrick's successor in the See of Armagh. Glistening and white in the unclouded splendour of the May-day sun rose the graceful spire of the new church, as if to remind the beholder that though time may lay its levelling hand on the human monuments of departed glory, it but intensifies and exalts the undying splendour of that wonderful edifice which St. Patrick, as the humble instrument of Divine Providence, placed on such an enduring foundation that it seems but to acquire the characteristics of youth from its hoary antiquity.

THOMAS BARRY.



Where is the Gap of the North ?

IN Lady Gregory's clever work, "Cuchullain of Murthemne: the Story of the Red Branch of Ulster," there is a passage at page 198, which is worth noting:—

'Then Maive said—"Some man of you must go out and stand against Cuchullain to save the army." "It is not I," said all the others, "for Cuchullain is no easy man to stand against." Then when some of them would not go out, Maeve made them cut a way through the mountain before them, that it might be left a lasting disgrace to Ulster. So they did this, and it is called Berna Ulaid, the Gap of Ulster, to this day.

'Now when they were setting out to cross the mountain, Maeve gave orders that the army was to be divided in two parts, each with its own share of cattle and of all other things, and she said that she herself and Fergus would go with one part by the Gap of Ulster, and that Ailell should go with the other part by the road of Midluachair.'

CAN THIS "GAP OF ULAD" BE NOW LOCATED ?

It is suggested that it can be seen on the Cooley Mountains by anyone looking North from the Bush Railway Station. The mighty breach on the crest of the mountain is singularly like a great military road by which even yet an army hard pressed in Cooley might escape to the North. It is called by the natives, Barnes-Vave, or Barna-Mhaeve, i.e., "Gap of Maeve," thus leaving in Cooley one trace, at least, of the devastations of the famed Soldier Queen.

The natural "Gap of the North" is the Moyry Pass. But this is in Armagh: not in Louth. Besides, the story distinguishes the Gap of Ulad from Moyry Pass. The second part of the army went "by the road of Midhluachair." In Eire all roads led to Tara. "There were five great roads in Ireland which led to the fort of Teamhair. Slighe Midhluachra was a northern road, but nothing has yet been discovered to prove its exact position."—*O'Donovan*, Introduction to "Book of Rights."

Our story locates this road as passing through Louth northwards and we may conclude through Moyry Pass. Nor can County Louth itself be the "Gap of the North," because it is not a gap but a plain. Yet how could the "Gap of Ulad" in the Cooley mountains be a lasting disgrace to Ulster? Ulad was in those days (until A.D. 322) co-extensive with Ulster, [*Book of Rights*, p. 36, N.E.] and Louth was part of Ulster.

Aubrey de Vere's enchanting description of Louth may well redeem from barrenness this arid note:

"Meantime within Murthemné's lands its lord
Cuchullain, musing like a listening hound,
For many a rumour filled that time the air,
Sat in remote Dún Dalgan* all alone,
Chief city of his realm. On Uladh's verge
Southward that lesser realm dependent lay
Girt by a racing river.*

[*Dundalk]

[*the Dee]

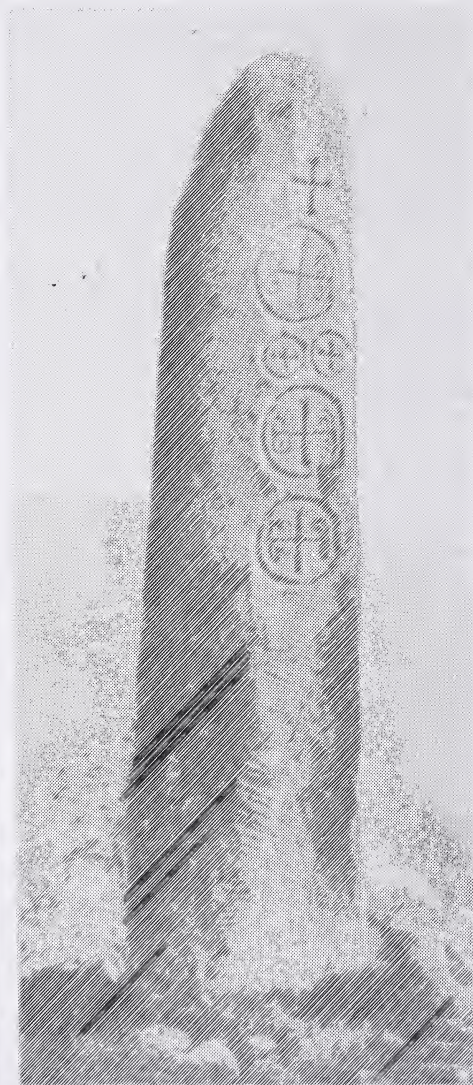
The days of mountain climbing are past for the writer of this note, but perhaps some of our younger members would explore the gap in the mountain over the Bush, and give an exact description, in fact survey, of it in our next issue; its width, is it natural or artificial, whither does it lead, where would an army having passed through it, unite with another that passed through Moyry Pass? Is the local name given correctly above? FNDA.

[Lady Gregory, p. 198, refers to the great Breach of Murtheimhne: can this be the same as "the Gap of Ulad?"]



PHOTO. BY

FRONT



HENRY G. TEMPEST.

BACK.

KILNASAGGART STONE.

Kilnasaggart Stone.

THIS remarkable stone stands in a valley just outside the Louth border, in the parish of Jonesborough, four or five miles from Dundalk, and a short distance to the east of the old road from Dundalk to Newry.

Our two illustrations, taken within the last few weeks, represents its present appearance.

It stands seven feet four inches high, is one foot six inches wide, and is six inches thick; and the tradition of the people of the neighbourhood is that there is as much of it buried in the earth as there is above ground. It does not stand perpendicular, but is inclined somewhat to the east. On the face of the stone are two crosses, one plain and the other enclosed in a circle, and also the following inscription:—

IN LOC | SO TANI | MMAIRNI |
TERNOCH | MAC CERAN |
BIC ER CUL | PETER AP | STEL.

The inscription is in Irish, and means, according to Petrie—"This place, Ternóc, son of Ciaran the Little, bequeathed it under the protection of the Apostle Peter."

And Petrie remarks—"This was a departure from the custom of the early Irish Church, whose Patron Saints were nearly all natives of the soil."

Dr. Reeves says that this Ternoc, who devoted himself and his possessions to the service of God, and to whose memory the stone is erected, flourished in the beginning of the eighth century, and appears to have been a person of some importance, for his death is recorded in the Annals of the Four Masters at 714, and in the Annals of Tighearnach at 716, which is the correct year. His genealogy is given in the Book of Lecan, from which it appears he was of the same race as the great families of Macgennis and MacCartan.

On the back of the stone there are ten crosses within circles of various sizes. In Petrie's "Christian Inscriptions in the Irish Language," edited by Margaret Stokes, it is stated that "these crosses are incised, while the circles that enclose them are in relief."

This is not exactly so. There are but three such incised crosses enclosed in circles in relief; and these are the three larger ones in a line down the middle of the stone. In the case of the other seven both cross and circle are incised, and as these latter are placed in the spaces between, and around the larger ones, it seems to me that they are the work of a later period.

Rev. G. H. Reade, who described this stone in the Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries, Ireland, in the year 1856-7, states that it was a pagan pillar-stone that has been converted to Christian uses, and that the crosses are used to denote the triumph of Christianity over Paganism. If this is so, the three larger crosses on back will readily suggest Christian symbolism, whereas ten will not. Besides, these three crosses are more elaborate than the remaining seven, for their arms turn off in curving spirals, both above and below, whilst the others are plain.

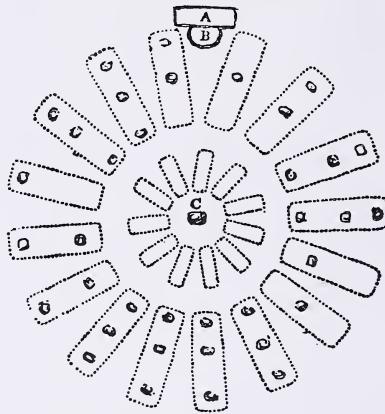
It is strange that Dr. Petrie, who is usually so accurate, represents both the uprights and arms of each of the ten crosses as turning off in these spirals.

This is not correct. And in Mr. Reade's illustration of back of stone he only shows four or five crosses.

Mr. Reade conjectures that the stone originally bore an Ogham inscription down along one of its edges, but that this edge and inscription were battered off by the primitive Christians, who wished to deprive it of every vestige of its pagan character.

Beneath the circles are thirty-one strokes also incised, which are believed to be tool-marks. On the slanting top of the stone is another cross within a circle, and right on the top is a little cylindrical hole, probably the socket of a metallic cross.

The stone (A) stands at the north or north-western edge of a circular raised plot, 50 feet in diameter. This plot is never cultivated, but around the stone, or the plot where it stands, there is no paling or protection of any kind. Mr. Reade describes this plot, as he saw it in 1856, and also gives the accompanying illustration of it. It is an ancient burial-place, of a very peculiar arrangement. The graves are placed in two concentric circles, with the feet of the dead pointing towards the centre, where stood a small pillar-stone. This pillar-stone is now gone, and there is nothing on the surface to show the existence of graves. But it is said that a ploughman, some years ago, on ploughing rather closer than usual to the plot turned up human bones.



It is indeed a great pity that this ancient burial-place and most interesting pillar-stone are not suitably enclosed with a railing. The owner of the ground, we believe, is most willing that this should be done.

Lying loosely at the foot of the pillar-stone are some other small stones worthy of notice. Two of these are marked with crosses, without enclosing circles, while a third seems to have been part of a holy water stoup, but which Mr. Reade believed to have been part of a pagan sacrificial stone basin. Beside the house of the farmer in whose field the stone stands is an enormous boulder, faintly marked with the cross and circle.

Kilnasaggart (Cill na Saggart) means the Church of the Priests.

Of the five great roads of ancient Ireland, one was the Miodhluachra. It was the road that led from Leinster through Louth into Armagh and Ulster. The exact location of this road has so far escaped discovery, but Petrie gives a number of quotations which go to show that the ancient road of Miodhluachra passed close to Kilnasaggart, and that it was the same that latterly came to be known as the Moira Pass. In the fourteenth century English writers knew the place by the name of *Inermallane* and *Emerdullam*.

In the "Brus," by Barbour, a Scottish poet (1316—1396), there is the following reference to a battle fought there by Edward Bruce:

"Men call that place Innermallane
In all Ireland traitor is nane;
For Schir Edward there kepted they,
They thought he should not there away:
But his voyage soon as he tane,
And straight towards the pass is gane.
The Earl of Murray Sir Thomas
That put him first to all essays,
Lightly on foot with his menzie,
And apertly the pass took he,
Thir Irish Kings I spake of air,
With all the folk that with them were,
Met him right sturdily: but he
Assailed so with his menzie
That mauger theirs, they wan the pass
Slain of their foes many there was,
Throughout the wood them chased they,
And seized in sik fusion the prey
That all the folk of their host were
Refreshed well a week or mare.
At Kilsagart Schir Edward lay,
And thar wele sone he has heard say
That Dundalk was assemble
Mad of the lordis of that cuntre."

In Grace's Annals, quoted by Petrie, it is said, at the year 1343, that Sir Ralph Ufford, the Justiciary, "going into Ulster he suffered great loss from MacCartan in the pass of Emerdullam, having lost his clothes, his money, his vessels of silver, and some of his horses: he also lost some of his men. Yet by the help of the men of Uriel he at last made his escape into Ulster."

There was a monastery here it is said in olden times, and tradition has it that the monks had a mill here. A mill there certainly was, and it was worked until comparatively recent times, but the present owner has cleared away the last vestiges of it. The fields adjacent to that in which the stone is placed are known as the "Mill Field" and the "Kiln Field," and a little eminence is called "Shelling Hill," where the process of "shelling" or separating the husks from the grain was performed by winnowing, before the introduction of fans into corn-mills.

In another field adjoining is a rock or boulder in the ground, in whose upper surface, which is level with the surface of the ground, there is a natural hollow, about 14 inches wide and six inches deep, which is nearly always filled with water; and this is called the "Wart Well." It is locally believed that by washing hands afflicted with warts in this well the warts will soon disappear.

It is said that Sir John MacNeill made an attempt to remove this pillar-stone, about fifty years ago. The men of the neighbourhood of Kilnasaggart were afraid to oppose him lest he should retaliate. But the women came out armed with apronsful of stones, and treated his workmen to such a fusillade that they had to beat a hasty retreat, and the attempt had to be abandoned.

Sir John MacNeill was somewhat of an antiquarian, and his object may only have been to remove the stone to his own grounds, or he may have been merely exploring the place. But the native Irish people at this time had such a reverence for their old monuments, particularly those of a religious character, that they would not allow any profane interference with them.

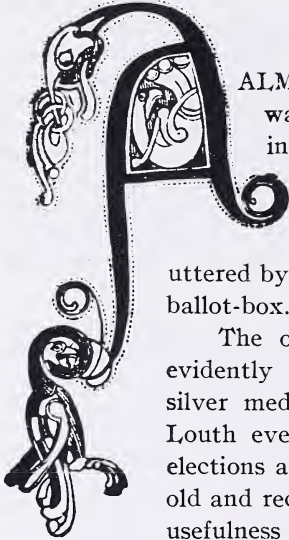
I wonder if the stone were being removed at the present day how many people of the neighbourhood would raise a hand in its defence.

HENRY MORRIS.



County Louth Election Medal, 1755.

(See Illustration.)



ALMOST one hundred and fifty years ago, an Election was fought for the representation of the County Louth in the Irish House of Commons. Unfortunately there was no local press in existence at that period to place on record for the benefit of posterity, the eloquent speeches and lavish promises so often uttered by candidates and their friends in the days before the ballot-box.*

The only memento we have to remind us of what was evidently a contest of absorbing interest at the time, is a silver medal—the earliest medal in connection with a County Louth event of which I have any record. Medals relating to elections are uncommon, unlike election literature in general of old and recent times. Addison, in his “Dialogues upon the usefulness of Ancient Medals” observes: “We ought to look on medals as so many monuments consigned over to posterity, that may possibly last when all other memorials of the same age are worn out or lost.”

This medal was struck by the Louth Independent Club to commemorate the return, as members of parliament, of Thomas Tipping and the Right Hon. William Henry Fortescue (afterwards Lord Clermont) in opposition to Mr. Bellingham. It is now very rare.

On the obverse:—A rock rises from the sea, on which Hibernia stands, holding a harp—the four winds blow on the surface of the rock. Inscription: “Firm to our country as the rock in the sea.”

Reverse:—By our strict union in Louth, we disappointed the hopes of our enemies, on the 1 of Novem 1755 in the 29 year of the reign of K. Geo. the II. whom God long preserve. Above is a heart with two hands clasped together, and around is the inscription:—“May the lovers of liberty never lose it.”

The illustration shows the medal exact size: 45 millim. My specimen is suspended by a dark green ribbon, two inches wide, possibly to be worn as a club badge.

Dr. William Frazer, who describes this medal in his papers on “The

* The first Newspaper published in the County Louth was the “Drogheda Newsletter,” a bi-weekly paper, price 4d., C. W. Evans, Drogheda, 1800 to 1812. The first Dundalk newspaper was the “Louth Free Press,” which appeared in March, 1829, edited by Wm. Brett, author of “Reminiscences of Louth.”



LOUTH ELECTION MEDAL, 1755.

Medals and Medallists of Ireland" in the Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland (p. 313, vol. VIII. fourth series) with good reason describes it as resembling the work of Thomas Pingo, who possibly struck it. Dr. Frazer also states one in lead appeared for sale in a Catalogue some years ago.

This medal is also described and illustrated (p. 678), in "Medallic Illustrations of British History." Compiled by Edward Hawkins—Edited by Augustus W. Franks and Herbert Grüber, London, 1885. Two vols.

It would be very interesting to know more about this old county Independent Club—if there are any minute books or other relics of it in existence?

JAMES M'CARTE, M.R.S.A.I.

[Mr Garstin, F.S.A., has memoranda about this Medal and the election it commemorates. He exhibited and described it to the Members of the Royal Society of Antiquarians of Ireland last year.]

Notes and Queries.



IN the "Newry Magazine" (vol. I. page 293) published in the early years of the last century there is a description of a stone said to be in the front of an old house at Castletown, belonging to Charles Eastwood, Esq. The writer describes it as having been a gravestone dedicated to the memory of John Bellew, knight, and Margaret Plunkett, his wife, who were father and mother to Robert Bellew, A.D. 1526.

The writer of the article, John Bell, gives an illustration, drawn by himself, engraved by Brocas (No. 17 on plate) with his reading of the Latin inscription, the letters of which were cut in relief in 'German' characters:—

"Johannis Bellew Militis
et Margareta Plun-
ket uxoris ejus qui
fuere pater et Mater Roberti
Bellew memorie dedicatione anno 1526."

I would like to know if this stone is still preserved, or its present location if at Castletown? Perhaps some readers of these notes will oblige with the desired information as it is very desirable to have all such stones carefully noted, and where possible photographs or rubbings taken from them.

By the way, this John Bell was a contributor of many articles (and some illustrations) to the "Newry Magazine," many of them dated from Dundalk, and describing local scenes and places; the subterranean chambers in the Roden Demesne, the Cromlech on Killen Hill, which was *then* evidently little changed since Wright described it. But some years after it fell a prey to the 'improving' farmer and was totally destroyed, to the great loss and regret of antiquaries.

William Shaw Mason, author of a "Statistical Account or Parochial Survey of Ireland" (3 vols., Dublin, 1814-15) left accounts of the parishes of Dundalk and Termonfeckin which, I believe, have never been printed, and are now in the Record Office, Dublin.

J. M'CARTE, Liverpool.



Earliest Printing in County Louth.



PRINTING in most provincial towns in Ireland was of very late introduction. The only places within this County in which there was printing in the eighteenth century, were Dundalk and Drogheda. This latter town of course is a County in itself, half being on the Louth side of the Boyne and half on the Meath side, and may therefore be treated as a Louth town to a certain extent. I have not come across any printing in either Drogheda or Dundalk in the seventeenth century nor within the first half of the eighteenth. There were of course booksellers in Drogheda much earlier than this, but there is no evidence that they actually printed. It is easy to understand that owing to the proximity of Drogheda to Dublin there was little occasion for printing there at first. This excuse, however, would not apply so much to Dundalk.

Through the courtesy of Mr. Palmer, Editor of the Drogheda "Argus," there appeared in that paper about two and a half years ago a list of such items of printing in Drogheda as I was then able to ascertain with the assistance of friends. Since that date a few other items have been met with by me, but none of an early date. Mr. John Power in his "Handy Book about Books" gives the year 1757 as the year in which printing was first executed in Drogheda but does not give his reason for so stating, or what the printing was. The earliest specimen of printing which I have seen is a pamphlet on the practice of Land Surveying in Ireland, the author of which was Mr. Peter Callan, and which was a little octavo pamphlet containing 48 pp. A copy is to be found in the "Leinster" Collection in the National Library, Dublin. Unfortunately no printer's name is given. Mr. W. C. Hazlett in his "Collection and Notes," published in 1875, mentions a little duodecimo of about 160 pp. entitled: "Coffee House Jests" which he states was printed in Drogheda. Then we have Sir Henry Tichbourne's "Letter from the Siege of Drogheda." This was printed in 1772 and is a small octavo pamphlet of 44 pp. containing a dedication to "Mrs. Tipping" by Phil. Skelton, and was printed by John Fleming of West Street who in the following year (1773), printed the "Irish Widow," a drama. A copy of this rare edition is to be found in the Dublin Municipal Library formerly the Library of the late Sir John T. Gilbert. There are four other and later specimens of Drogheda printing in the latter part of the eighteenth century to be found in the Halliday Pamphlets of the Royal Irish Academy. They are mainly religious in character and were printed by Charles Evans, the first being dated 1787.

The earliest newspaper published in Drogheda was entitled "The Drogheda Journal, or Meath and Louth Advertiser." It was printed by Charles Evans, whose address is given as Lawrence street. One solitary copy dated 1787 exists in the Public Record Office, Dublin. This paper contained 4 pp. of four columns each and is No. 1378, vol. XV. If it appeared bi-weekly, calculating by the

number and volume this journal must have been begun in or about the year 1774 or in 1763 if it was only a weekly paper, which is very likely. This newspaper is not mentioned by Dr. Madden in his "Irish Periodical Literature," and proves there must have been a bi-weekly press in Drogheda at a much earlier date than has hitherto been supposed.

The output of the press in the nineteenth century is hardly old enough to deserve notice in this Journal, though I might mention that the next newspaper published in Drogheda was the "Newsletter," also printed by Charles Evans, or his son C. W. Evans, and was either the successor of the "Drogheda Journal" or a rival contemporary. It had reached its XL. Vol. in 1808. One cannot help thinking that there must have been a greater out-put from the Drogheda presses than the few specimens which survive, and perhaps if careful search were made in the home libraries of some of our country houses or in residences in Drogheda some additional specimens might be found and even evidence that the press began its work at an earlier date than mentioned above.

In Dundalk the press seems to have been started at even a later date than in Drogheda. Through the kindness of Mr. William Tempest, J.P. and by the kind courtesy of the Editors of each of the Dundalk newspapers, a list I drew up of books and pamphlets printed in Dundalk has appeared from time to time, the latest appearance being in the "Dundalk Examiner" on the 31st January, 1903. To this list I have nothing further to add of an early nature. As however some of the readers of this Journal may not have seen this list in the local press, I will just mention that the earliest item of Dundalk printing I have yet found appeared in the year 1782, and is entitled: "A Succinct Detail of some late Proceedings at Dublin, by an Impartial Observer." It is an octavo pamphlet of 16 pp. and is to be found in the Halliday Collection in the Royal Irish Academy. In an old Catalogue printed in Belfast by Finlay some time about 1834 or 1835, there is given as printed in Dundalk in 1793 an Irish Catechism. Unfortunately I have never come across any copy of it. The earliest printer whose name appears as printer in Dundalk was Joseph Parks, who printed in Dundalk in 1799, and from information received from his grand-daughter, kindly obtained for me by Mr. Tempest, it appears that Joseph Parks was the first printer in Dundalk and that he printed a number of school books for the Rev. Wm. Neilson in 1797 and 1804, including some works in Gaelic. Mr. Neilson was a good Irish scholar and the author of a fine Irish Grammar. He also published Greek exercises in Dundalk in 1804 at Joseph Parks' press. Parks' published four small volumes for children under the general title of "Parks' Juvenile Library." Another early printer in Dundalk was J. Corry, who printed a Grammar of Arithmetic in 1816, and a book of Colloquies in Latin in 1828. The newspaper press does not seem to have started at an early date in Dundalk as the first paper there "The Louth Free Press" did not appear until 1820. I hope any reader of this Journal who can supplement this article with titles of works printed prior to 1800 will kindly do so.

E. R. M'CLINTOCK DIX,
17, Kildare street, Dublin.



The Modern Irish Poets of Oriel, Breffni, and Meath.

M

R. JOHN MACNEILL, on a recent occasion* in Dundalk, complained how little was known of the local Irish poets that flourished in this part of the country during the last two hundred years. And he gave it as his opinion that some of these were men whose poetry was far superior—as efforts of expression of the human mind—to anything that any English poet of the present day could produce. And yet, he said, not alone their words, but their very names are forgotten, except by a few old Irish speakers who still traditionally remember some of their songs.

Under these circumstances, an article dealing with these modern local Irish poets will not be out of place in this journal. I will confine myself to the counties of Louth, Meath, Armagh, Monaghan and Cavan. This, as an Irish-speaking district, has been cut off from the other Irish-speaking parts of Ireland for well nigh three hundred years. The Ulster plantation hemmed it in on the north and north-west, while to the south lay the Pale. Louth and Meath indeed belonged of old to the Pale, but had become more than half Gaelicized from their long contact with the Irish all around them. The tenacity with which Irish lived on in this district is simply wonderful; Irish was commonly spoken over all the counties mentioned, till about two generations ago. It is over seven hundred years ago since De Lacy and De Courcy over-ran Meath and south-east Ulster; and it is over six hundred years ago since the "Statute of Kilkenny" forbade the use of Irish within the Pale under pain of forfeiture of the lands and the personal liberty of the subject. And yet Irish is still spoken under the very shadow of some of the great Norman castles scattered throughout this district, while the castles themselves are roofless and tenantless, and mouldering in decay. So much for the district. From an Irish point of view it may be treated as an entity in itself, both from its isolation, and from the fact that practically the same dialectical characteristics are found throughout its whole area.

In treating of its poets I only propose to deal with those who belong to the "New School" of Irish poets.

Readers of Dr. Hyde's works on Irish literature are aware that in the beginning of the eighteenth century the style of Irish poetry became completely revolutionised. This was brought about by the fall of the great Irish and Anglo-

* The Dundalk Feis, 1904.

Irish houses, owing to the disastrous wars of the seventeenth century. When these houses fell, the great bardic schools that flourished under their patronage, fell also ; and in the absence of these schools, the classic poetry was no longer possible, for it required many years of careful training on the part of those who essayed to write it. To quote Dr. Hyde's expressive description of this change :—

"Almost in the twinkling of an eye Irish poetry completely changed its form and complexion, and from being, as it were, so bound up and swathed up with rules that none who had not spent years over its technicalities could move about in it with vigour ; its spirit suddenly burst forth in all the freedom of the elements, and clothed itself, so to speak, in the colours of the rainbow. Now, indeed, for the first time, poetry became the handmaid of the many, not the mistress of the few ; and through every nook and corner of the island the populace, neglecting all bardic training, burst forth into the most passionate song. Now, too, the remnant of the bards—the great houses being fallen—turned instinctively to the general public, and threw behind them the intricate metres of the schools, and dropped too, at a stroke, several thousand words, which no one except the great chiefs, and those trained by the poets understood ; whilst they broke out into beautiful, and at the same time intelligible verse, which no Gael of Ireland or Scotland and who has ever heard or learned it, is likely ever to forget. This is to my mind perhaps the sweetest creation of all Irish literature, the real glory of the modern Irish nation and of the Scottish Highlands, the truest note of the enchanting Celtic siren, and he who has once heard it and remains deaf to its charm can have little heart for song, or soul for music. The Gaelic poetry of the last two hundred years is probably the most sensuous attempt to convey music in words, ever made by man. It is absolutely impossible to convey the lusciousness of sound, richness of rhythm, and perfection of harmony, in another language."

Such is the poetry about which we know nothing. It is some time since I began the study of our local Irish poets, and I may say I was drawn to that study by the extraordinary beauty of a few of their songs that had been published in the Gaelic Journal.. But I had not proceeded far, till I discovered that I had entered on unbroken ground ; that there was little or no information available about either the poets or their works.

Dr. Hyde in his recent great work, "The Literary History of Ireland," only mentions five or six of them, omitting some of the best, and laments, that owing to the awful destruction of northern Irish MSS., most of their works are irrevocably lost.

Hardiman, in his "Irish Minstrelsy," gives the names of five, along with O'Carolan. And O'Reilly, in his "Irish Writers," gives a list of eighteen ; nine of whom belonged to the county Cavan. These are the only three works where one should expect to find anything about these poets and, as will be seen from the following list, none of them gives more than a mere moiety of the names. But even had one the names, their works are still an unknown quantity, for with the single exception of O'Carolan, not a score of pieces has ever been published from all the others.

It often happens that the very difficulty of a pursuit endows it with a greater fascination than it should otherwise possess, and so I felt in this case.

Fortunately about a year and a half ago, I discovered and got possession of all that was left of the great MS. collection of Matthew Moore Graham of Dundalk. He had been a life-long student of Irish literature, and had amassed together a very large number of Irish MSS. ; but after his death a servant maid began using the old books for lighting the fires, and before her action was discovered they had all been reduced to ashes except thirteen. In these thirteen MSS. I found a great many pieces of those poets in whom I was interested. Since then I have come across some County Monaghan MSS., and also one or two in Meath, while I have got the loan of others from members of the Gaelic League ; and a most valuable collection belonging to Monsignor O'Laverty, P.P., M.R.I.A., Holywood, Co. Down, has been shown me by Mr. John MacNeill. Besides these I have made the

acquaintance of Nicholas O'Kearney's great work, and some others in the Royal Irish Academy as well as the MSS. in the library of Lord Rossmore.

I mention all this to show the derelict state of the subject, and as a kind of apology for the shortcomings, and the incompleteness of the following list, and also in the hope that it might be the means of bringing to light any other Irish MSS. that may be in this district. Only the other day I was told in Meath of a certain house where a number of old books including several MSS. had been piled on the top of an old dresser, and the rain came in through the broken thatched roof, and the books and MSS. lay there water-soaked and became a rotten mass and had to be thrown out. And some of these may have contained the only extant copies of priceless gems of song!

Space will not permit any more than the briefest reference to each name in the following list:—

I.—POETS WHOSE WORKS I HAVE MET WITH.

1. JOHN O'NAUGHTEN (Seághan Ua Neachtáin), a native of Nobber, Co. Meath, flourished between 1670 and 1730. He wrote both in the classic and modern metres. His extant works amounting to between four and five thousand lines, will soon be published by the Gaelic League.
2. THEIG O'NAUGHTEN (Tadhg Ua Neachtáin), son of the last mentioned poet, flourished about 1700-1750. He wrote both in the classic and modern style, and strangely enough was more attached to the classic metres than his father. Dr. Hyde says there are about twenty or thirty of his pieces still extant.
3. TURLOUGH O'CAROLAN (Toirdealbhadh Ua Cearbhalláin) was a native of Meath—near Nobber. Born 1670, died 1737. Hardiman in his "Irish Minstrelsy" published twenty-four of his songs containing over five hundred lines. Yet he was not a great poet, and his fame rests rather on his musical than on his literary compositions.
4. NIALL MAC CANN (Niall Mac Cana) flourished about 1700. He belonged to the Fews, Co. Armagh, but lived afterwards at Mullaghcrew, Co. Louth—(O'Reilly). I have met with four of his pieces containing about 200 lines.
5. SEUMAS MAC CUARTA (Seumas Mac Cuarta) lived about 1712. He is said by O'Reilly to have been a native of Cúmaíne, Co. Louth, but the Irish-speaking people of Farney claim him as a native of Lisnamoyne, parish of Donaghmoyne, Co. Monaghan, and from all the stories they can relate about him it seems their claim is well founded. He is perhaps the greatest of the modern poets of the district of which I am treating. The MSS. I have seen contain thirty-six of his songs and poems, amounting to about two thousand five hundred lines. He became blind in early life, and was ever afterwards known as *An Daoi Mac Cuarta*, i.e., "MacCourt the Blind."
6. PEADAR O'DOIRNIN (Peadar Ua Doirín, called also "*Ua Doirín a' Séad*"), born 1682, died 1768. O'Daly asserts that he was born at Cashel, Co. Tipperary, but this statement rests on very slender evidence, and is probably not correct. O'Kearney calls him "the persecuted bard of Louth." It is certain he lived all his life about the counties of Louth and Armagh, and he is buried in the ancient and almost disused churchyard of Urney, near Forkhill. He ranks with MacCourt and Art MacCooey as the greatest poets of this district. I have come across forty-one of his poems, con-

sisting of about seventeen hundred lines. His poetry is very musical and certainly resembles the style of the Munster bards.

7. ART MACCOOEY (ΑΡΤ ΜΑC CÚMΔΙΞ) born 1715, died 1773, was a native of the Fewes, Co. Armagh. He was the last family bard of the O'Neills of Toprass, Co. Louth. One of his poems—*Uir-éill an Chéadain*—became very popular, and there is hardly an Irish speaker in Armagh, Monaghan, or Louth, that cannot recite part or whole of it. A fine metrical version of it in English is given by Dr Sigerson in his "Bards of the Gael and Gall," under the title of "The Fairy Land of Promise." I have only met with fourteen of his pieces, amounting to over a thousand lines. He wrote the "Grave-lay" for Peadar O'Doirnin.
8. PATRICK MACALINDON (ΠΑΤΡΙΞ ΜΑC ΔΙΛΑΝΘΟΝ) died 1733. Hardiman says he "was a sweet lyric poet whose productions display considerable genius." He was a native of the Fewes. O'Reilly gives from his own recollection, the opening lines of six of his songs, and says, "Like most of the poets of his day, the principal part of his compositions depend only on the memory for their preservation. It is much to be regretted that they are not committed to writing whilst they are yet to be had." But alas it seems no one troubled to commit them to writing, and undoubtedly most of them are now lost. I have seen but seven of his songs—about three hundred lines—and only one of those is quoted by O'Reilly. One of his pieces is in *reirde* metre.
9. FERGUS MACBEATHADH (ΦΕΡΓΣΥΡ ΜΑC ΒΕΑΤΑΘ). All I know about him is that he wrote the "*Φερετλοι*" or "Grave-lay"—consisting of one hundred and thirty lines—for Patrick MacAlindon. This office was always performed by one brother poet for another; hence he must have lived in this district, and about the time of MacAlindon.
10. JAMES WOODS (ΣΕΥΜΑΡ ΜΑC ΚΟΙΛΕΑΘ). I have been told he was an apothecary in Dundalk. O'Kearney says he was an M.D. and "a learned bard." He wrote the "Grave-lay" for Art MacCooley. I have also met with two other pieces by him.
11. WILLIAM BUIDHE O'KIERAN (ΛΙΑΜ ΒΟΥΔΕ ΥΔ ΚΙΑΡΙΑΝ) lived about 1750. He was a native of Meath. I have met with five or six of his poems. O'Reilly quotes the first lines of three poems.
12. PATRICK O'PRONTY, (ΠΑΤΡΙΞ ΥΔ ΠΡΟΝΝΤΑΙΞ). He is the author of three pieces in one of the MSS. He is, no doubt, the same man who wrote two of the MSS. in my possession, and who signs himself *ΠΑΤΡΙΞ Ο ΠΡΟΝΝΤΑΙΞ ΜΗC ΝΕΙΛ*. He wrote in a strong, beautiful hand, and his transcripts bear date 1732-33.
13. REV. PAUL O'BRIEN (ΑΝ Τ-ΑΤΑΙΡ ΠΟΛ ΥΔ ΒΡΙΑΝ) was a native of Co. Meath and was professor of Irish in Maynooth college from 1802 till his death in 1826. O'Reilly says he was "a living magazine of the poetry and language of his country." I have seen but four or five of his poems. One is a poem of forty lines in *reirde* metre, which he wrote to O'Reilly on the publication of the latter's great Irish dictionary, and which O'Reilly printed in the beginning of that work. Another is an address (17 stanzas) to the Gaelic Society of Dublin, printed in Vol. I. of that Society's "Transactions," Dublin, 1808. Some of his poems are also to be found in Maynooth College Library.
14. SEUMAS TEVLIN (ΣΕΥΜΑΡ ΥΔ ΤΕΥΛΙΝ) was a native of Billywood, near Kells, Co. Meath, and lived as late as 1845. He was a prolific writer of poli-

tical ballads in English, of no mean order. I know but two of his pieces in Irish, but these show such familiarity with, and mastery over, Irish metres, that I have no doubt he wrote many more. One of his pieces—*Ἀν Ὀἶρ ἡ Ἀν Ἰλίουπεδ*—became very popular, and is still widely known in Meath.

Of the following poets I only know of one poem by each; but no doubt each of them was well known in his respective locality, and some of them may have written dozens of simple songs in the lighter kinds of Irish verse. But it was not the practice of the later scribes to write down these, but rather to copy what they already found written and which was recognised Irish literature. The Irish speakers prized them as long as they lived, but with their death these songs died also. It was a great pity the scribes did not write them down, as there have been MSS. written down all through the 18th and 19th centuries—the latest I have seen having been written in 1882:—

15. MANUS MACARDLE (*ἡ μᾶς μᾶς Ἀρτ Ἰλίουπεδ*, called also, *Ἀν τ-Ἰλίουπεδ ἡ μᾶς Ἀρτ Ἰλίουπεδ*), lived in the time of Peadar O'Doimin, and was a native of the Fews. He was a fuller by trade.
16. HUGH VALLELY (*Ἀρτ Ὀἶρ ἡ μᾶς Ἰλίουπεδ*) was a native of Donaree, parish of Donaghmoyne, Co. Monaghan, and lived about the beginning of the 19th century. He was a hackler by trade, and his songs were common in Farney a generation ago.
17. MICHAEL MACMAHON (*ἡ μᾶς μᾶς Ἰλίουπεδ*, called also *ἡ μᾶς ἡ μᾶς Ἰλίουπεδ*), lived about Broomfield, parish of Donaghmoyne. He wrote a famous song called *ἡ μᾶς ἡ μᾶς Ἰλίουπεδ* or "The Football of Inniskeen." It was a great inter-county contest between the men of Louth and the men of Farney, and according to the poet the Farney men gained the day.
18. — MURPHY, (*Ὀἶρ ἡ μᾶς Ἰλίουπεδ*) an Omeath poet, author of *ἡ μᾶς ἡ μᾶς Ἰλίουπεδ*.
19. CHARLES MACCABE (*Ἀρτ Ὀἶρ ἡ μᾶς Ἰλίουπεδ*); 1739, a native of the Co. Cavan, and an intimate friend of Turlough O'Carolan. He wrote the "Grave-lay" for O'Carolan. See Hardiman's "Irish Minstrelsy" part I.
20. WILLIAM JONES (*Ὀἶρ Ὀἶρ ἡ μᾶς Ἰλίουπεδ*) lived somewhere near Inniskeen, Co. Monaghan.
21. BRIAN TOMALTY (*Ὀἶρ Ὀἶρ ἡ μᾶς Ἰλίουπεδ*) lived in Drogheda about 1845.

Of the works of the above twenty-one poets, there are, to my own knowledge, about ten thousand lines still extant. And probably if the many other MSS. in the Royal Irish Academy and in private hands were searched much more would be discovered. Of this not a thousand lines have yet been published.

II.—POETS OF THIS DISTRICT WHOSE WORKS I HAVE NOT MET WITH.

O'Reilly, being I believe a County Cavan man, gives a rather numerous list of Co. Cavan poets, not one of whose compositions I have so far come across. However, it is quite probable that those who lived early in the 18th century may have their works preserved in MSS., if they had not been all destroyed:—

1. REV. PHILIP BRADY, Cavan, 1710. He is still vividly remembered in Farney as "*ἡ μᾶς ἡ μᾶς Ἰλίουπεδ*" or "Parson Brady." He is said to have been a Catholic, who turned Protestant, and became a parson. But if so he managed to keep popular with the Catholics, by poking fun in Irish at the

Protestants, who, of course, did not understand that language. He was very witty, and many of his epigrams and smart sayings are still related, but I have never heard a song attributed to him.

2. FIACHRA MACBRADY (Fíachra mac Bhrádaigh), 1712; Co. Cavan; "a witty schoolmaster of Stradone, and a tolerably good poet." O'Reilly mentions six of his songs.*
3. JOHN O'FARRELLY (Seán mac Fílip uí Fearghaile), of Mullagh, Co. Cavan—1724. O'Reilly quotes six of his poems.
4. JOHN O'NEILL (Seán ua Néill), 1722; a native of Tullagh-Omeath, near Carlingford. He was known as An Dódaireán ua Néill, i.e., "O'Neill the Deaf," and is still remembered in Farney on account of some contests he had with An Dál Mac Cuarta. O'Reilly quotes three of his compositions.
5. THOMAS O'CLERY (Tomár ua Cléirigh), Co. Cavan.
6. BRIAN DUFF O'REILLY (Brian Dubh ua Raḡallaidh), 1725; a native of Stradone, Co. Cavan. O'Reilly says he is the author of Eadtra Míic na Míochomairte. I have seen several copies of this tale, but nowhere else have I seen it attributed to this man.
7. PHILIP O'REILLY (Fílip ua Raḡallaidh), 1726; Cavan.
8. BRIAN RABHAGH O'CLERY (Brian Rabhagh ua Cléirigh), 1730; a native of Moybologue, Co. Cavan.
9. FEARDORCHA O'FARRELLY (Feardorcha ua Fearghaile), 1736, of Mullagh, Co. Cavan. O'Reilly says he composed several songs, and he quotes the first lines of four.
10. WILLIAM O'BRIEN, (Uiam ua Bhráin); 1760, of Rossnaree, Co. Meath.
11. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Pádraigh ua Bhráin), 1790; of Newgrange, Co. Meath. Hardiman says he is the author of several odes and excellent songs.
12. MARY MACALINDON, (Máire Nic Alánson) of Co. Armagh, a sister, I think, of the poet Patrick MacAlindon.

III.—POETS PROBABLY OF THIS DISTRICT.

I have met with several pieces—over a thousand lines—by the following poets, but so far I do not know to where these poets belong. However, as their works occur in MSS. of this district it is very probable that they themselves or most of them, belong to this district also.

1. Pádraigh ua Cearbhall or Pádra an Baine.
2. Áine Mór ua Muiréada.
3. Réadómonn ua Muiréada.
4. Eógan Ruadh mac an Báir.
5. Tomár ua Baccáin.
6. Pádraigh ua Caḡalain.
7. An t-Ádair Bhráin ua Caḡalain.
8. Toirdealbhadh Óg mac Donnada.
9. Toirdealbhadh Óg ua Mícaín.
10. Eógan ua Donnghaite.
11. Muirir ua Moḡáin.

* Since the above was written I have come across three pieces, about 150 lines, by Fiachra MacBrady; and a long piece called Comairte macLáma, of which I have seen several copies, is in one MS. attributed to Philip Brady.



John D'Alton's Manuscripts.



BESIDES writing his valuable "History of Drogheda" (two volumes) and the "History of Dundalk"—though the latter was chiefly the work of J. Roderick O'Flanagan—John D'Alton compiled a History of the County Louth, of which he left a description:—"Five unbound parts octavo for a History of the County Louth, its records and events, chronologically arranged under the several Baronies, Parishes, and other important localities, with note of excursions, and personal observations throughout the county."

In the "Gentleman's Magazine" for 1847 (Pt. II. page 361-64) there is an interesting article on the County Louth from the pen of John D'Alton in which he refers to his materials for a history of this county extending to five volumes of manuscript, and expresses the hope "that the result of my labours will not perish with me."

Prefixed to his "Annals of Boyle" (two vols.) is a classified list of the MS. collections he had prepared for Irish county and family histories to the number of over 200 octavo volumes. Amongst them were:—

"One volume thick octavo for a History of County Armagh.

"One volume octavo, compilation in aid of a History of the County Down, comprising notices of Bangor, Downpatrick, Hillsborough, Killeleagh, Newry, Mourne, &c.

"One volume octavo designed in aid of a History of the County Monaghan, but at present only comprising notices of the general history of the county, with that of the Town of Monaghan."

Besides these county histories, a volume (No. 27) contained notices of the families of Gernons, Tuites, Plunkets, Bellews, etc.

Where are all these valuable manuscripts now? I am sure, the Members in general of the County Louth Antiquarian Society are particularly interested in the fate of the "History of the County Louth."

JAMES M'CARTE, Everton, Liverpool.



Duleek :

THE CIANACHTA; AND THE BATTLE OF KILLINEER.

DULEEK is said to have been the first place in Ireland where a stone church was built (O'Reilly). The correct name is *Ṫaímliaḡ*, and means a stone church.

Duleek was in ancient times the capital of an important territory in East Meath, inhabited by a Munster sept. They were of the race of Cian, son of Oilíoll Olum, the famous King of Munster, and hence their territory was called the Cianachta (*CIANAḶṬA*).

In the wars and other events of the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries, they figure very largely.

Soon after this, however, they were conquered and overrun by the Southern Ui-Neill, and thenceforth they cease to be heard of in the Irish Annals. In O'Donovan's *Fragmenta Annalium Hiberniæ* (page 177), there is a very detailed and interesting account of a great battle fought near Drogheda, in the year 868 A.D., between Aedh Finnliath, King of Ireland, and Flann, King of Cianachta.

The battle was fought at *Cill na nṪaíḡre*, which O'Donovan identifies as the place now called Killineer, a townland of St. Peter's parish, on the road leading n.w., about half-way between Drogheda and Monasterboice. As I have stated, Aedh was King of Ireland and Flann King of Cianachta. Flann had publicly insulted Aedh, and it was commonly believed that Aedh would proceed against him. Aedh's wife was Flanna, and she was also the mother of Flann by a former husband. She was at this time in Kildare, building a church to St. Brigid, and she had a great number of people felling timber in the adjacent woods, and she learned from their conversation that all Leinster intended to "rise out" to assist Flann. So she hurried to where her husband was, and urged him to assemble his forces at once, and not to be taken unawares by Flann and the Leinstermen. Aedh did so; the King of Ulster and the King of Meath came to his aid, and Cianachta was plundered without meeting any opposition. Meantime Flann had collected his own forces as well as those of Leinster; and there was also at this time a large fleet of Norsemen in the mouth of the Boyne, and at Flann's request they joined his standard.

Aedh had crossed the Boyne and was proceeding with his booty northwards, when he was pursued by Flann and his allies. The old chronicler, who was probably an eye-witness of the battle, tells us that "Aedh ascended a hill which commanded a view of the great hosts which were in pursuit." This must have been near Killineer, for he immediately called all his men around him and made a great address to them, all of which is set down in the chronicle.

Flann and his allies were completely defeated. The battle must have been a sanguinary one, for we read that not more than one-fourth of the Norsemen escaped, and Flann was slain, and his head brought before the King of Ireland. And the King was sorry on beholding the head of Flann, for Flann was a youth of comely appearance and great valour and renown. And the King lamented over him, and his own people reproached him. Two years later Aedh himself died at the monastery of Dromiskin.

For a fuller account of this battle see O'Donovan's *Fragmenta*.

HENRY MORRIS.

Old Borough Records.

"Every man who contributes to the stock of historic materials, by copying inscriptions or making sketches of the remains of bygone ages is entitled to the gratitude of his fellow-men; and it is the duty of every lover of his country to rescue from destruction any remains which throw a light on the acts of the olden time."—*Sir William Betham.*

"Tis' not time lost to talk with antique lore,
And all the labours of the dead, for thence
The musing mind may bring an ample store
Of thought, that will her labours recompense."

"To make the country familiar with its own history—with the various events of great importance which have occurred in our memorable annals, is, surely, a task both honourable in itself and productive of advantage to the people."—*A writer in the old "Irish Library."*



THE value of the old records of the Boroughs of Ireland as throwing light upon the national institutions, life, and manners of bygone times, and illustrating social progress, can scarcely be exaggerated. Yet few of those which have escaped the decay of time and the flames of partisans have as yet been published.

The only Irish Borough records, I can think of—edited and published—are those relating to Cork, Youghal, and Kinsale, and in recent years, Dublin and Belfast.

At page 219 of the "History of Dundalk"—(D'Alton-O'Flanagan) there is a reference to the old corporation books containing accounts from 1755 to 1759, of the Michaelmas dinner given to the freemen of the Borough of Dundalk. If these books are available, extracts from them, carefully edited, would give some interesting notes on the manners and customs of the civic fathers of the 18th century.

The Michaelmas dinners were an imitation of the Mansion House Banquets, and were usually given in the old 'Guildhall' (as it was called) which, I believe, stood where the present Market House now is—on the west side of the Square. The Bailiff (or Mayor) presided, and it would appear the Corporation had the pleasure of treating themselves, for the cost of the feast was charged in the Corporation accounts—a rather shabby proceeding when one bears in mind the wealth and influence of such a close body as the old Corporators were, and the position of the Mayor.

J. M'CARTE, Liverpool.

According to D'Alton's "History of Drogheda" a great many valuable Corporation books were kindled for fuel by the Yeomanry on guard in the Tholsel in 1798.

Ardee is an ancient Borough, but how far back do the corporation records extend?



Mr. Redmond MacGrath's Collection of Antiquities.

FOR many years Mr. Redmond MacGrath, Dundalk, has been a kind of Antiquarian Society in himself. By keeping some few relics of antiquity always displayed on his counter, and by talking about them to the country people, he has managed to arouse an interest in these things, with the result that many valuable old "finds" have been brought to him which would otherwise be destroyed.

Mr. MacGrath's family, though a long time settled in Dundalk, came from Mountbagnal and there is a tombstone, some 200 years old, to a Redmond MacGrath, an ancestor of his, in Newtown graveyard.

The following is a list of the antiquities in his collection :—

STONE.

1. Hammer-stone, $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches in circumference, $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches high, with incised ring about it, apparently for the reception of the withe handle by which it was held; ends worn hollow as if in use in striking some metal weapon such as a chisel. Found in James MacDermott's fort in Dulargy. Some old coins were also found there.
2. Stone (granite) Celt, $5\frac{1}{2}$ ins. by $2\frac{1}{2}$ ins. Found at Dunbin, in a field belonging to Patrick Callan, where some silver objects have also been found. Tradition of battle there.
3. Quern (granite), $13\frac{1}{2}$ ins. in diameter, $4\frac{1}{2}$ ins. high, with perpendicular hole for handle. Found at Jenkinstown.
4. Quern (granite), same size. Found at Slieve-na-Gloch. Apparently never finished, as the hole for handle has not been bored.

BRONZE.

5. Bronze Celt, $5\frac{1}{2}$ ins. by 2 ins. at cutting edge. It is of the winged or flanged type to which antiquaries have given the name "Palstave." It was found on Faughart Hill in a heap of stones (probably remains of a cairn) in Michael Byrne's land.

IRON AND OTHER METALS.

6. Spear-head, or short sword, iron; blade 10 ins.; cross $3\frac{1}{2}$ ins.; insertion in handle 4 ins. Found at Slieve Gullion.
7. Small Bullet Mould; scissors pattern. Found in a cave at Pallala in Glenmore.
8. Pair of Iron Manacles, found in some cave.
9. Irons, supposed to be parts of saddle and spear. Found under a rock on Feede Mountain. There were many other remains found here which have not been preserved. A tall straight stone stands opposite the spot where they were found as if to mark it.
10. Flint Pistol, barrel brass, 9 ins. Found at Mullaghbawn; said to have belonged to Redmond O'Hanlon, the famous rapparee.
11. Small Flint Pocket Pistol, iron barrel, 3 ins. long; name, "T. Jones, London" on lock. Found in Rampart river near Ladywell, Dundalk.
12. Small Flint Pistol, iron barrel, $3\frac{1}{2}$ ins. long; "Blair, London" on lock. Found at Glasdrummond, County Armagh.
13. Small Cap Pistol, barrel iron, $3\frac{1}{2}$ ins. long. Found at Castletown, Dundalk.
14. Old Revolver, found at Castletown.
15. Peculiar complicated type of Revolver—locality unknown.

16. Stock and Lock of Flint Pistol. Found at Kilcurry.
17. Dagger, blade 4½ ins., haft iron, 3½ ins., bound round with strong linen thread; plain brass guard. Found in Aughrim, County Monaghan.
18. Dagger, blade 4½ ins., haft 3½ ins.; haft and guard brass and richly ornamented. Found near Ballagan, Cooley.
19. Pike-head, blade broken, haft 10 ins., iron inset for handle 9½ ins. hook 4 ins., cross-blade 3 ins. Found to left of Moira Pass.
20. Spear-head, iron, blade 10 ins. (piece broken off), 2½ ins. wide at middle. Found in same place as last; "bucketsful" of bullets found here also.
21. Horse shoe, iron. Dug up at Lisdoon, Dundalk.
22. Old shallow pewter dish, 17 ins. diameter; said to have been collection plate at a church. Came from County Wexford.
23. Ornamented octagonal brass case 2½ ins. by 1½ ins.; believed to have been a relic case.
24. Old Irish iron Candlestick for rush and mould candles, in wooden stand, 28 ins. high.
25. Silver Jug, stands 3 ins. high; believed to be about 200 years old.

MISCELLANEOUS.

26. Old Yew Cross for rosary beads, 10 ins. by 3½ ins.; dated 1731.
27. Three Pictures on religious subjects, done on fine silk with coloured tread; also old style of framing. Belonged to Mr. MacGrath's grandmother.
28. Two beautifully carved bog oak Candlesticks, stand 8 ins. high; also an heirloom in his family.
29. Teapot, Cream Jug, Cup and Saucer, of very peculiar black delph; also a long time in Mr. MacGrath's family.
30. Old Oil Painting of a man dressed in style of Elizabethan period; figure 18 ins. by 13 ins. This was painted on a board which formed part of the leaf of an old table in Mr. MacGrath's possession. The top of table was marked in squares as if used for playing some game, and this painting was on the under side.
31. Old Flag belonging to the Dundalk Shoemakers' Guild.

COINS.

Mr. MacGrath has a large collection of Coins, some very interesting. These include English and Irish coins of the Edwards, Philip, and Mary, Elizabeth, James, William of Orange, the Georges, &c.; also coins from almost every country in Europe, and most parts of America, as well as those of some Asiatic countries.

BOOKS.

1. Volume VIII. of the Statutes of the Irish Parliament from A.D. 1310 to 1798. This work consists of eighteen volumes in all.
2. Bible, 17 ins. by 11 ins. by 3½ ins., leather binding, belonging to Anthony Marmion, who was executed in Drogheda in 1798. Marmion's name and the date, 1797, is printed on a red leather label on cover. The book was published in Dublin in 1794, and contains 600 subscribers' names, very many from this part of the country.
3. Election Address of Alexander Dawson, to the Freeholders of Louth, in his own handwriting, written at the Red House, Riverstown, Ardee, in June, 1826.
4. Six numbers of Sir Jonah Barrington's "Historic Anecdotes and Secret Memoirs of the Legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland." They contain a number of valuable plates, and a facsimile copy of what is alleged to be "An Original Letter from Counsellor Henry Shears to the author a few hours before his execution for High Treason, May, 1798." This work was suppressed by the Government. On the cover is an inverted harp, and an otherwise mourning design.
5. Irish Catechism in Roman characters, which belonged to the Bennetts of Forkhill.



The Society's First Excursion.

JULY 14, 1904.

THE first Excursion of the Archæological Society was carried out on Thursday, 14th July, with very satisfactory success. The route chosen—the Valley of the Boyne—offered a wide variety of attraction, and, though a hazy morning discouraged many who had intended making the journey, the party of forty-four who put trust in the unpromising sky, enjoyed a pleasant day's sight-seeing.

The Council of the Society were perhaps unfaithful to their own county in making the trip more a Meath than a Louth one. It was not from want of pride in the antiquities and the natural beauties of County Louth that this course was fixed upon, but rather with a desire to secure the co-operation of the people of the Drogheda neighbourhood.

The original purpose was to include a visit to Mellifont and Monasterboice in the day's programme, but it was found impossible to make time for this; and these monuments can be more thoroughly inspected on a special excursion. It may have been wise, too, to begin our antiquarian studies at the first chapter of our country's history, at the evidences of its very earliest civilization and worship, which, though just beyond the present boundary of County Louth, are a vestage of the first occupation of our southern plain.

The members of the excursion party coming from Dundalk, and from places along the line, travelled to Drogheda by the morning train. Picking up the Drogheda contingent there, and some friends from Dublin, Castleblayney, and other districts, they drove along the Mell road to Oldbridge, which was reached before half-past ten. The mist had by this time cleared; and, although the day remained dull and sunless, the rich slopes of corn and grass edging the river's course, and the thick masses of plantation that close in the Valley of the Battlefield, were seen to great advantage.

At the Obelisk, Mr. Garstin gave some interesting information about the battlefield and the monument, and pointed out the position occupied by the two armies.

The party then divided. Half the members took the steam launch to Slane through the picturesquely wooded heights and fresh meadow slopes of the Boyne, interrupted at intervals by the aggravatingly high banks of the canal. A halt was made at Rosnaree, where Father O'Coigley, O.P., Dundalk, recalled the story of King Cormac, whose grave is variously reputed to be under the walls of Mr. Osborne's house and in a thicket adjoining it, and the many other legendary associations of the spot with Cucullain and St. Columcille.

The other group proceeded by brake to Townley Hall, to which Mr. Balfour had kindly invited the Society. The close plantations of the Demesne and the romantic course of the stream afforded some beautiful woodland views. The rhododendron walks, which are very luxuriant here, had lost their bloom, but all the other foliage was at its richest.

Mr. Balfour very courteously showed the party through his house, which is reckoned the finest of the late 18th century mansions of County Louth, and put on view many of the historic relics of which he is the possessor. The most beautiful is the sword of honour of William III., with an exquisitely carved ivory hilt of Flemish workmanship, representing, with other designs, the lion of Nassau trampling on the dogs of France. This sword was given by William to his fellow-countryman and chief counsellor, the Earl of Portland, after the

death of whose son it was bought by Mr. North of Dublin, an ex-chief Justice of Jamaica. The latter bequeathed it to Mr. Lambert Brabazon, the owner of the land adjoining King William's Glen at Oldbridge, which the English army occupied at the battle. Mr. Brabazon appropriately presented it to the resident territorial family, in whose hands it has now been for three generations.

The Jacobite relics are also of great interest. They were the property of Cardinal York, the last of the royal line, and were bought in Rome by the late Mr. Balfour about 1843 at a sale of the effects of a Cardinal to whom they had passed. Amongst them is a book about eight inches square, in a faded red cover—a Meditation Manual of James II.—pondered often, we may suppose, in his years of exile in St. Germain, while he wrote, like another King Cormac, his prudent and earnest counsels to his son.

Mr. Balfour also possesses autograph letters of Schonberg in one of which conforming to the erroneous spelling in which his name has been transmitted in history, he makes the central n an m. He possesses also an original patent of Charles I. to one of his ancestors, as well as a portrait of that king, presented by himself to an ancestor, Sir William Balfour.

After a hurried glimpse, which was all their time allowed, of the gardens, bright with a profusion of roses, the party resumed their journey and reached Newgrange. Here Mr. Garstin communicated the gist of the latest observations of Mr. Coffey and others upon these monuments, placing the date of their erection at about 1500 B.C., and made some comments on the mysterious circle of standing stones, of which only three remain upright, encompassing the mound. Every member of the party entered the cave and had an opportunity of examining its wonderful construction and the multiplicity of carvings upon the stones.

The drive was continued to Slane, with a view of the large mound of Knowth, yet unexplored, on the way, and a short glimpse of the abbey on the historic Hill, and of Fenner Castle and the Tower of Screen upon the horizon. The launch arrived and disembarked its passengers about the same time, and all lunched together at the Boyne Ville Hotel.

A number climbed the hill, and inspected its many interesting ruins, while the others continued the river trip by the castle and demesne. The return journey was begun about 4 o'clock, and those who had visited Newgrange took the water-way homewards, while the others travelled by the brakes to Newgrange, which they explored fully, passed Dowth, and, crossing the bridge on the battlefield, drove by the Rathmullan road, in view of the Jacobite entrenchments, to Drogheda.



APPENDIX.

Origin and Proceedings of the Louth Archæological Society.

The formation of a County Louth Archæological Society was discussed at an informal meeting called by a few persons interested in its advancement.

On the 25th August, 1903, a preliminary meeting was held in Dundalk, attended by Mrs. O. J. Kelly, Messrs. William Tempest, J.P., Redmond Magrath, P. L. Macardle, P. Mathews, T. F. MacGahon, Daniel Lynch, H. G. Tempest, Laurence Murray, and Henry Morris. At this meeting it was decided that steps should be taken to establish an antiquarian society for County Louth, and a public meeting was arranged for 8th September in Dundalk. Mr. H. Morris was appointed Secretary pro tem, and circulars were distributed in which the objects of such a society were set forth as follows :—

- I. It will enable those who are privately working in the field of Irish Archæology to render one another mutual help and encouragement.
- II. The results of their researches and investigations can be put in a tangible form in the shape of papers to be read before the Society, and afterwards published.
- III. It may be the direct means of saving many of our Monuments of Antiquity from destruction, either by the hand of Time or the more dangerous hand of the Agriculturist; and indirectly it can work for the same end by disseminating correct ideas about our old monuments, and trying to create an interest and pride in them among the general public.
- IV. It can secure the services of skilled experts, and have many of the prehistoric places in Louth examined and explored.
- V. It may be able to establish a County Museum where many objects of antiquarian interest, that would otherwise be lost or destroyed, will find a safe resting place.
- VI. It can organise popular lectures on Irish History or Archæology, and in this and many other ways increase our knowledge of, and therefore our interest in our own Country.

A further meeting was held in Dundalk on the 8th September, and the Society was formally established.

A Provisional Committee was appointed, consisting of Rev. N. Lawless, P.P., Rev. P. Fagan, P.P., Messrs. Wm. Tempest, J.P., J. W. Turner, R. Magrath, J. Dolan, D. Lynch, T. F. MacGahon, P. Mathews, and Mr. O. J. Kelly as Hon. Treasurer, and H. Morris Hon. Secretary. The constitution and code of rules (see page 71), were also drawn up and agreed to at this meeting.

On 1st January, 1904, the public Inaugural Meeting of the Society took place in the Town Hall, Dundalk. The election of officials and Council for the current year were ratified, the constitution accepted, and the organising of excursions and the issue of a Journal approved.

Mr. Joseph T. Dolan, M.A., the newly-elected President, occupied the Chair.

An address (see page 5) was then delivered by Mr. J. Ribton Garstin, M.R.I.A., President R.S.A., on the historical and antiquarian remains of Louth.

A vote of thanks (at the instance of Mr. Tempest, seconded by Col.-Jones), expressing the

great interest Mr. Garstin had aroused in all his listeners by his comprehensive survey, terminated the proceedings.

The new Council—who hold office till January next—has met at least once a month since their election.

Its chief work has been getting new members for the Society, securing papers for the present journal, and discussing the present condition of many of the ruins of Louth and district.

It has made application to the Louth County Council to repair, enclose and take over the charge of St. Mochta's House at Louth, and the result of this application is anxiously awaited.

The Council has recently suffered a great loss in the death of their respected Treasurer, the late Mr. Owen J. Kelly, Blackrock. At the June meeting a vote of condolence to Mrs. Kelly was proposed by J. W. Turner, Esq., M.A., seconded by Rev. J. Quinn, C.C., and agreed to in silence. Mr. Edward Lambe, Drogheda, has been unanimously co-opted to fill the vacant position.

The Council has to thank Mr. MacCarte, Liverpool, for the use of the block from which the illustration of the Louth Election Medal has been taken. The illustrations of the Tara Brooch and of the Monasterboice crosses are copied from Miss Stokes' "Early Christian Art in Ireland," by special permission of the Comptroller of His Majesty's Stationery Office. The plan of the pagan cemetery of Kilnasagart is taken from "Wakeman's Antiquities," a new edition of which has been carefully and ably edited by Mr. Cooke. The Council acknowledge with thanks, the receipt of the Report and Proceedings of the Belfast Naturalists' Field Club.



LOUTH ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

OBJECTS.

I. To preserve, examine, and illustrate all ancient monuments and memorials of County Louth, and adjoining districts.

II. To study the arts, manners and customs of the past to which these monuments belong.

III. To find out all that is ascertainable about the history of Louth and surrounding districts.

IV. To establish a museum or museums in the County where objects of antiquarian interest may be preserved.

CONSTITUTION.

1. The Society shall be called "The Louth Archæological Society," and shall be non-political and non-sectarian.

2. The Society shall consist of Honorary Members, Members and Associates.

3. The Annual Subscription of Honorary Members shall be 10/-; of Members, 5/-; and of Associates, 2/6.

4. All Subscriptions shall be payable in advance.

5. Every Honorary Member and Member has the right of free admission to all Meetings and Lectures of the Society, and also of receiving a copy of all publications of the Society.

6. Associates have only the privilege of free admission to the Meetings and Lectures of the Society.

7. The Society shall be governed by a President, four Vice-Presidents, Hon. Treasurer, Hon. Secretary, and a Council of ten, of which four shall form a quorum.

8. The Officers are ex-officio Members of the Council.

9. Only Hon. Members or Members shall be eligible for election to the Council.

10. The Officers and Council shall be elected by the Hon. Members and Members at the Annual General Meeting in each year, the date of such Meeting to be appointed by the Council.

MEETINGS.

11. The Society shall meet four times in each year, on such days as the Council shall consider

most convenient, when lectures may be delivered or papers read and discussed on historical or archæological subjects, and objects of antiquarian interest may be examined.

12. Besides these General Meetings the Council may arrange for Evening Meetings, for reading and discussing papers, and also for excursions to places of historical or antiquarian interest.

13. The General Meetings of the Society shall not be held in the same town, but shall circulate among three or four of the most important centres in the County. At each General Meeting the place of the next such Meeting shall be decided on.

PAPERS.

14. No paper shall be read before the Society without being first submitted to and approved of by the Council.

15. All matters concerning existing religious or political differences shall be excluded from the papers to be read and the discussions to be held at the Meetings of the Society.

16. The Council shall determine the order in which papers shall be read, and also those papers, or the parts thereof, which shall be published.

17. All papers read before the Society shall thenceforth be the property of the Society.

PUBLICATIONS.

18. The Council shall issue—provided the funds permit—at least one journal or publication during the year, containing such papers, or parts of digests of papers, and other matter relating to the Society or its proceedings, as the Council considers fit.

GENERAL.

19. Amendments, or additions to the objects, constitution, and rules of the Society, can only be made at the Annual General Meeting.

20. Only Hon. Members or Members can propose such amendments or additions; and notice of any such motions must be lodged with the Hon. Sec. at least one month before the date of the Annual General Meeting.

COUNTY LOUTH ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

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THE design on the cover of the County Louth Archaeological Journal is adapted from the cover of a very old Irish Book, in fact a copy of the Gospels, as the four symbols would lead one to suspect.

This book-cover, called the "Soiscel Molaise" (pronounced Seeskhel Molash), or Molaise's Gospels, is "the oldest relic yet found in Ireland, the date of which can be ascertained with any degree of accuracy." It is at present in the Royal Irish Academy Museum. It is a small box or cumdach of yellow mixed metal, made to hold the Gospel written by St. Molaise, and dates back, as the inscription shows, to the latter part of the 10th century, say 970.

Molaise, from *Mo*, my, a devotional prefix, and *Lasren*, diminutive of *Lasair*, a flame, was of royal descent from both sides. His father was a descendant of the Rudrician Kings,

while his mother, Mommá, was a daughter of the Kings of Ulster. His youth was one of grace and charity and he founded a monastery shortly after he left school. This would be, according to Miss Stokes, to whose treatise* on the subject I am indebted for both description and pictures of the relic, about the year 560. The inscription on the cundach says it was made for Cennfailad, who, according to the Four Masters, son of Flaithbertach, successor of Molaise, died in A.D. 1025. It is strange that Molaise was alive in 560, when his successor's son only died in 1025. However that may be, he is said to have been the cause of St. Columba's exile. Molaise was visited and consulted by many holy men, some of whom, at his command, wrote a Soscel in two days and a night, the sun shining by night for them.

Another *Soscel* (literally "good news") or Gospel is alluded to in Hennessy's translation of the Irish life of St. Molaise. According to this story, Molaise went to Rome, and on the porter refusing to open the gates, he knocked three times on them so that everything that was fastened in Rome became unloosed. The Pope, on enquiring the cause of the noise, was told that a powerful holy cleric of the Gaedhil was come. Then the "Abbat of Rome" directed him to be brought before him, and, as a test, ordered him to say a public mass. The altar in St. Peter's was prepared for him, but no

* Archæologia, Vol. xliii., p. 144 et seq.

mass-book, goblet, or bell was put thereon. Upon the Saint's wish, these came from heaven. The little mass-book, subsequently called the *Soscel*, was all that Molaise would accept—the "*Soscel bec*," or little *Soscel*, he called it.

He journeyed home, according to this account, on a flag-stone, and found the goblet and bell there before him. He sent them back three times, but they were thrice miraculously returned to him.

The box of St. Molaise's Gospels is of bronze plates of three colours: these are rivetted and turned over at the edges. It is oblong in shape, and $5\frac{1}{2}$ " x $4\frac{1}{2}$ " x $3\frac{1}{8}$ " in size. The ornamented parts are plates of silver with gilt patterns also rivetted to the bronze frame-work. On one side is a figure in curiously embroidered robes, supposed to be St. Molaise himself. The cover of the Journal is adapted from another side, the central portion being an almost exact copy of the original. The four figures are the four beasts in the Revelation, with the heads of a man, a lion, a bull, and an eagle. These four animals are often used to represent the four Evangelists. The flat spaces on the cover, which contain the lettering, have been worked into the design for that purpose, and are not of course on the original.

HENRY G. TEMPEST.

WANTED.

Siege of Drogheda. By DEAN BERNARD.

Survey and Report on the Woods and Plantations on the Estate of the Earl of Roden, Dundalk. By R. M. STIRLING. Dublin, 1826.

Diary of Ann Countess Mordaunt. Edited by the EARL OF RODEN. Duncairn Press, Belfast, 1856.

Report to the Commissioners of the Glyde Districts in the Counties of Meath, Monaghan, and Louth By ROBERTS. Dublin, 1844.

Map of the County Louth. By Lieut. ALEXANDER TAYLOR, 1787.

Dundalk Grammar School Roden Prize Medal (by WOODHOUSE.)

J. M'CARTE,

51, St. George's Hill,

Brett's History of Dundalk.

Everton, Liverpool.

Bassett's County Louth, 1886.

Boyne and Blackwater. By WILDE, 1850.

Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland. By PRENDERGAST.

D'Alton's History of Drogheda, Vol. I., 1844.

D'Alton's History of Dundalk, 1864.

Marmion's History of the Maritime Ports of Ireland, 1858.

Newry Magazine, 1815, 1816, 1817.

Stuart's History of Armagh, original edition, 1815.

Tempest's Dundalk Almanacs, 1861 to 1870.

Wright's Louthiana, 1748 or 1758.

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